

Athenian and American Slaving Ideologies and Slave Stereotypes in Comparative
Perspective

by

Graham Butler
B.A., University of Victoria, 2013

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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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Many contemporary classical scholars, such as Benjamin Isaac and Denise McCoskey, frame the ancient Athenian attitudes toward their slaves as akin to or the same as White American racism. In this thesis, I argue that Athenian literary representations of slaves, in comparative perspective, are actually only superficially similar to those constructed in White American literature. I survey ancient Greek comedy and tragedy's representations of slaves and demonstrate that the genres' slave stereotypes recognise that slaves share with citizens a common humanity. I survey White American literature from the antebellum and Jim Crow eras, and I establish that its stereotyping of Black slaves and freedmen dehumanises them through the construction of racial difference. I argue that this crucial difference between Athenian and White American representations of slaves indicates that the Athenian city-state's social system did not feature racism as it is articulated by critical race theorists Eduardo Bonilla-Silva and Joe Feagin.

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Introduction

They tell us of the Israelites in Egypt, the Helots in Sparta, and of the Roman Slaves, which last were made up from almost every nation under heaven, whose sufferings under those ancient and heathen nations, were, in comparison with ours, under this enlightened and Christian nation, no more than a cypher—or, in other words, those heathen nations of antiquity, had but little more among them than the name and form of slavery; while wretchedness and endless miseries were reserved, apparently in a phial, to be poured out upon our fathers, ourselves and our children, by *Christian* Americans! ... These affirmations are so well confirmed in the minds of all unprejudiced men, who have taken the trouble to read histories, that they need no elucidation from me.¹

—David Walker, *Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World, but in particular and very expressly to those of the United States of America*

The “*causes*” of this difference between these ancient and modern slaveries were, according to the brilliant and incendiary David Walker in 1829, the various structural manifestations of racism in the United States. A growing number of classicists disagree. “Racism” surfaced in antiquity as “a logical consequence of the slave-outsider equation,” writes the ever influential Moses Finley, and it was a ‘prejudice,’ or “the view commonly taken in ordinary discourse,” that “slaves as a class were inferior beings.”² Timothy Long agrees in his seminal *Barbarians in Greek Comedy* that the ancient Greeks knew “racial prejudice.” It was “the raw intuition that the barbarian is inferior,” and it was “as violent and virulent as what we know today.”³ In Benjamin Isaac’s recent and extremely controversial work, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, racism is still presented as an “attitude,” an attribution to “groups of people collective traits, physical, mental and moral, which are constant and unalterable by human will.” The direction of

¹ Walker 1829, 3, 9

² Finley 1980, 118-9

³ Long 1986, 162-3. Long’s “we” is American, given he was born and he has published in the U.S.

this attitude, whether it flows from the privileged to the downtrodden or the other way around, is irrelevant to Isaac's definition of racism—"the French are born cooks" qualifies.⁴ Prejudice, attitude, and feeling predominate the framing of 'racism' in the work of most classicists, and any ancient, generally Athenian, dichotomist ideas about Greeks and barbarians, especially when connected with the topic of slavery, are often construed either explicitly or implicitly as 'racist'.⁵

Yet current critical race theorists, influenced by Walker and the legendary sociologist, historian, and anti-racism advocate W.E.B. Du Bois, insist that the battle against White supremacy involves more than fighting against individuals' attitudes and prejudices. As leading critical race theorist Eduardo Bonilla-Silva puts it: "racism has always been 'more than prejudice'."⁶ It is structural and systemic, meaning that White elites for economic and political motives progressively imposed a "racialised social system," of which racial slavery was but one part. Through this social system, White elites kept non-

⁴ Isaac, Ziegler and Eliav-Feldon 2009, 10-11; Isaac 2004, 23; Isaac 2006, 33: "This paper is concerned exclusively with the history of specific ideas, not with the social history of antiquity or with the practice of discrimination and persecution in Greece and Rome." It is notable that Isaac is employing the same definitional structure as the ground-breaking 1940s historian, Ruth Benedict: "Racism is the dogma that one ethnic group is condemned by nature to congenital inferiority and another group is destined to congenital superiority." (Benedict [1942] 1945, 97; Bonilla-Silva 1997, 465) It is unfortunate that Isaac turns to such dated research, and yet robs it of its social history basis, instead of the critical race theories that rose to prominence in the 1990s, virtually all of which is missing from his bibliographies, most surprisingly the works published by Derrick Bell (e.g. Bell 1992) and by Micheal Omi and Howard Winant (e.g. Omi and Winant 1986), classics among race sociologists (Bonilla-Silva 1997, 466; Curry 2009; Feagin and Elias 2012).

⁵ For example, Edith Hall typically avoids actually using the words 'race', 'racism', or 'racialism' in her studies of barbarians in Greek Tragedy, but still flirts with modern American racism's terminology to subtly draw a Greek-American comparison, using terms such as "Greek supremacy" (Hall 1989, 74) and "poetic lynching" (Hall 2006, 254). On the notion that the Greek-barbarian and insider-outsider dichotomies are, or are similar to, racism, or that they lead to racial slavery, see further: duBois 2003, 121ff; duBois 2009, 54ff; Lape 2010, 33, 36, 46 n. 164, 65ff; McCoskey 2012, 31, 54-6; & Miller 2012, 54-5. Against these interpretations stand these more nuanced studies: Tuplin 1999; Rihll 2011; Gruen 2011; Malkin 2011; Wrenhaven 2012, esp. 64; Vlassopoulos 2010; & Vlassopoulos 2013, esp. 1-32. David Konstan falls somewhere in the middle, in my opinion. Sc. Konstan 2001. Denise McCoskey should be singled out for her use of Omi and Winant's racial formation theory, but it generally falls by the wayside when she discusses Classical Athenian democracy, for which she employs the much more dated *altérité* frameworks, citing Francois Hartog for Herodotus, Edith Hall for tragedy, and Timothy Long for comedy.

⁶ Bonilla-Silva 2015, 75

elites physically and socially separated in hierarchically racialised subgroups by unevenly distributing societal and economic opportunities (i.e. privilege) to them. From the beginning, the aim was curtailing purportedly ‘superior’ groups’ ability to empathise with ‘inferior’ ones, hampering their ability to unite along class or gender lines, and thereby paving the way for the nearly unhampered degradation and exploitation of the most ‘inferior’ groups. Almost always, the racialised group constructed as most ‘inferior’ has been Blacks. The elite-driven separation occurred in most facets of society. Elites and their racial allies legally and often violently barred ‘inferior’ groups, but especially free, freed, and enslaved Black folk, from the uplifting privileges which White elites shared with the ‘superior’ groups: the most skilled labour professions, the most education, recourse to the legal system, participation in politics, use of the franchise, and freedom itself.⁷

This exclusionary system stands in stark contrast to the ancient Athenian’s social system with respect to their slaves, freedmen, and the non-native population which identified by the ethnicities typical in the slave population. In labour, slaves, freedmen, and metics regularly performed skilled work as bankers, clerks, shopkeepers, bailiffs, doctors and medical assistants, as well as ship owners and shipping tycoons.⁸ In these

⁷ The critical race theory which informs this paragraph’s point of view: Bonilla-Silva 1997; Bonilla-Silva 2015; Alexander 2010; Feagin 2006; Feagin 2010; Feagin and Elias 2012. I have not employed Joe Feagin’s “white racial frame” terminology because I do not feel it has yet been adopted in mainstream scholarship. It should be noted that the conclusions of these papers and books can be reached through the reading of historical studies, particularly labour histories, most of which are regularly cited as fellow ‘realists’ by the critical race theorists. Sc. Du Bois [1903] 1997; Du Bois [1924] 1968; Skaggs 1924; Du Bois 1935; Elkins 1976; Foner and Lewis 1978; Jones 1985; Roediger and Foner 1989; Roediger 1991; Jones 1998; Jones 1999; Blackmon 2008; Roediger and Esch 2012; & Hayes 2013.

⁸ Bankers and clerks, see: Demosthenes 36, 45, 49, 52.5, etc. Shopkeepers, see: Hyperides 3, Aeschines 1.97. Bailiffs, see: Xenophon *Memorabilia* 2.8, *Oeconomicus* 12ff. Doctors and medical assistants, see: Plato *Laws* 4.720a-e (Finley 1980, 106). Ship owners and shipping tycoons, see: Lampis and Phormio in Demosthenes 34 & 49.31 (E. Cohen 2000, 134-5). “Nor was there a slave ‘level of work: in the larger establishments, urban and rural, slaves performed all tasks from the most menial to the professional and managerial.” (Finley 1980, 81-2)

professions, and even in the labour types most commonly seen as ‘slavish’, such as mining, citizens and slaves, Athenians and barbarians, were often ‘fellow workers’.⁹ All of this work required education, both professional training and instruction in reading and writing, which, while not available to many mining or agricultural slaves, was unproblematically passed onto perhaps even the majority of urban slaves, and would serve them well after manumission.¹⁰ Freedmen of foreign ancestry who managed to become naturalised citizens, such as Pasio, Phormio, and Apollodorus, were, without undue interference, able to give speeches and vote in assemblies, perform jury duty, as well as prosecute other citizens, either personally or through a ‘lawyer’ with more fluent Greek. Even slaves were able to give testimony in mercantile cases, seemingly without the application of torture.¹¹ While slaves obviously could not enjoy the political privileges allowed to naturalised freedmen, the city employed many ‘public slaves’ (δημόσιοι) who performed crucial administrative roles that, in some cases, gave them considerable authority over citizens, as money-testers (δοκιμαστής), ‘policemen’, and,

⁹ Xenophon *Memorabilia* 2.3.3: “Those with the means buy slaves, so as to have fellow workers, since they need helpers.” και οικήτας μὲν οἱ δυνάμενοι ὠνοῦνται, ἵνα συνεργοὺς ἔχωσι, καὶ φίλους κτῶνται, ὡς βοηθῶν δεόμενοι, Cf. Demosthenes 42.20, where a citizen states that “From my silver mines I myself, toiling and working with my own body, collected much [profit].” πόλλ’ ἐκ τῶν ἔργων τῶν ἀργυρείων ἐγώ, Φαίνιπτε, πρότερον αὐτὸς τῷ ἔμμαντοῦ σώματι πονῶν καὶ ἐργαζόμενος συνελεξάμην. Finley 1980, 81: “Other than law and politics (as distinct from administration)... all other occupations were shared by slaves and free men, often working side by side on identical tasks.” Cf. Randall Jr. 1953, 209.

¹⁰ Demosthenes 45.71-2: “My father, being a banker, bought him [Phormio], taught him letters, and instructed him in the trade.” ὁ πατήρ ὁ ἡμέτερος τραπεζίτης ὦν ἐκτήσατ’ αὐτὸν καὶ γράμματ’ ἐπαίδευσεν καὶ τὴν τέχνην ἐδίδασκεν. Cf. Xenophon *Oeconomicus* 7.41, 12-14. While a select few free and enslaved Black folk managed to eke out mechanical training and education, this was illegal in most states during the 19th century, and Whites found teaching in violation of the law could be and were prosecuted for it. W.E.B. Du Bois noted, in his study of Black skilled labour, that the “President of the Mechanical Association of Cincinnati, was publicly tried by the Society for assisting a young Negro to learn a tra[de].” (Du Bois 1902, 16) New Orleans was something of an exception due to its large free Black population before the U.S.’s annexation of the territory, but, while its artistic and educated community of free Blacks existed, legal restrictions, such as lack of ability to vote for the poor free Black folk, continued to plague this population. (Du Bois 1935, 153-6; Sterkx 1972, esp. 162-6; Berlin 1976, 312)

¹¹ On using a more fluent citizen to act as a lawyer, see: Demosthenes 36.1. Slave testimony in mercantile cases, see: the slave Lampis in Demosthenes 34.18.

perhaps, as the “recorder of laws” (τῶν νόμων ἀναγραφεὺς). Such roles offered the δημόσιοι opportunity to accrue wealth.¹² Furthermore, there is no evidence that manumission was ever legally banned in Athens as it was in many American states by the 1860s, and in fact Athens sanctioned several mass emancipatory and foreigner naturalisation events in which its militarily indispensable slaves and its staunchest allies were incorporated directly into its body of citizens.¹³ Large numbers of citizens in every generation of the classical Athenian democracy, unlike the vast majority of White Americans, had direct experience of slavery, as debt slaves to the pre-Solonian aristocracy and as captured chattel after their defeats in the Sicilian Expedition, in battles with the Spartans during the Peloponnesian War, or in piratical raids.¹⁴ The structural, institutional, and experiential differences between Athenian and American slaveries are acute.

Social systems, however, are not just the sum of their institutions. Ideologies and the stereotypes which bolster them are constructed to justify the imposition of the social

¹² Money-tester slaves, see: SEG 26:72, ὁ δὲ δοκιμαστής ὁ δημόσιος (Stroud 1974). This δημόσιος has the authority to confiscate counterfeit coins, as well as the for-sale property of any trader who does not accept the tester’s approved coinage. Skythian archer policemen, see: Bäbler 2005. For a public slave performing the role of τῶν νόμων ἀναγραφεὺς, see: Lysias 30, though, it must be noted, this Nikomachos’ status is controversial, some scholars arguing that he was slave (eg. Kamen 2013, 27-8), while others argue that he must have been a freedman (eg. Vlassopoulos 2009, 354). I personally think that the language suggesting manumission is metaphorical, meant more to decry his power over the citizen body than an accurate account of his life, which the speaker refuses to give (30.2: πολὺ ἂν ἔργον εἶη, λέγειν). For the purposes of this paper, either status still provides a stark structural contrast to the American antebellum legal system, from which slaves and freedmen were excluded.

¹³ On American manumission suppression, see: Klebaner 1955; Berlin 1976, 304-5; Higginbotham, Jr. and Higginbotham 1993. On Athenian mass emancipatory and naturalisation events, see: Pausanias 1.32.3, 7.15.7 (Battle of Marathon & extension of citizenship to Plataeans: Finley 1980, 99; Notopoulos 1941); Aristophanes *Frogs* 686ff; Diodorus Siculus 13.97.1; Hellanicus 323a F25; (Battle of Arginusae: Hunt 2001, 359-66). In addition to this, Solon had invited to citizenship immigrant families who came to Athens to practice a trade (Plutarch *Life of Solon* 24.2; Adcock 1914), and Cleisthenes evidently mixed metics, and perhaps even “all inhabitants of Attica, regardless of origin or status,” into the citizen body during his reforms (Aristotle *Ath. Pol.* 21.4; Lape 2010, 16).

¹⁴ Pre-Solonian debt slavery is distinguishable from America’s indentured servitude in that it seems not to have had set lengths for the arrangement, and many Athenian slaves, according to Solon’s poetry, had been sold abroad as *de facto* chattel slaves (Aristotle *Ath. Pol.* 2, 12; Solon Fr. 4.23-5, 36).

systems' discriminatory structures and to rationalise those already in place. Such stereotypes often begin as elite-driven propaganda that is both justificatory and manipulative, an active 'production of difference' in the popularised parlance of American labour historians David Roediger and Elizabeth Esch.¹⁵ In both American and Athenian slaveries, for instance, slaveholders spread the notion that their slaves, on the whole, were loyal to them and complacent in their station, and so their mastery was construed for the rest of society as victimless. This kept most citizens indifferent to the abuses of slavery, for slaves were actively presented in discourse as 'different' from citizens, who were portrayed as rabid freedom-lovers.¹⁶ Once a social system is in place and new generations are born into it, the degrading living conditions into which its elites have positioned certain population groups provokes further rationalisation from actors within the system. Hence the almost total exclusion of antebellum Black folk from educational opportunities provoked White Americans to rationalise the circumstance by stereotyping free and enslaved Blacks as naturally stupid and unsuited to schooling. The high visibility of educated slaves in Athens, in contrast, led to the assumption and stereotype that their slaves shared with citizens a range of intellectual capacities.

This is what I would like to term the 'production of similarity', the active rationalisation of peoples' societal positions that stress human commonality and has the

¹⁵ Roediger and Esch 2012. The concern of their book is how, from the 1830s onward, American managerial practices on plantations, in industrial settings, and in resource extraction contexts (mining especially) utilised racial logic to play racialised labour groups against one another, depressing wages, combatting unionisation, and extracting heightened productivity. As Joe Feagin notes in his review of the book, the scope of their theoretical construct—the 'production of difference'—can be used to conceptualise the whole American historical narrative. (Feagin 2013, 58)

¹⁶ As will be discussed in the body of this paper, the American and Athenian loyalty stereotypes, while performing similar functions, contrast sharply in their content, in that the American stereotype naturalises Black slaves' loyalty to White 'aristocrats' as an essential race characteristic, which antebellum literature warps into an attack on Black family cohesion. (Jordan-Lake 2005) The Athenian stereotype is more familial and predicated on portraying 'benevolent' masters as 'earning' their slaves' loyalties, a paradigm present in American literature but arguably subordinated to the naturalising, racial angles of the stereotype.

potential to breed empathy. This discourse was certainly present in the American historical context, especially in abolitionist circles, but the racialised social system was so infused with ‘difference’ that race had become “a real category of group association and identity,” in the words of Eduardo Bonilla-Silva.¹⁷ Therefore many White abolitionist writers, such as Harriet Beecher Stowe, argued for Black folk’s humanity while advocating political policies, like colonisation of freed slaves in Africa, still premised on what they thought to be essential, racial difference. America’s racialised social system ensured that the dominant ideological discourse was the ‘production of difference’.

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that David Walker was right to distinguish between ancient and modern slaveries on the basis of structural or systemic racism. Due to the more inclusionary structure of the Athenian social system, and due to the Athenians’ personal experiences as slaves, their dominant ideological discourse was the ‘production of similarity’. This is not to claim that Athenian ideology was opposed to slavery. Their ideology insists that slavery can be just when practiced according to democratically appropriate standards, but the direct democracy’s social system was so infused with egalitarianism, social inclusion, and the understanding of class as fortune-based and fluid that the Athenian social context, in comparative perspective, did not contain racism as it is articulated in critical race theory. This is reflected in the often radical difference between Athenian and American slave and freedmen stereotypes as they appear in each society’s literature. Hence, I will examine how classical Greek, but especially Athenian, slave and citizen character stereotypes more often converge than differ, and how this phenomenon contrasts for structural reasons with the divergent

¹⁷ Bonilla-Silva 1997, 472

citizen and slave stereotypes which White Americans employed in similar mediums to justify and perpetuate racial slavery and their “racialised social system.”

I will focus on the Classical Greek era, particularly the era of Athens’ democratisation, because this is the time period to which classicists and historians most often allude when they trace the origins of ancients’ supposed anti-barbarian racism and racial slavery. Occasionally I will consult later Greek material when it helps to clarify the older material. In the first chapter I will examine Greek comedy’s stereotypical slaves, with a focus on Aristophanes, Menander, and Herodas. In the second chapter I will survey Greek tragedy’s stereotypical slave characters’ traits, dealing with Aeschylus, Sophocles, and particularly Euripides. In the third chapter I will examine slave stereotypes in antebellum and Jim Crow era literature, surveying a number of the widely read and watched mediums, but especially plantation novels, travelogues of the South, newspaper editorials, ‘race management’ treatises, and the black-face minstrel show. While ancient documentary and philosophical sources will enter into the discussion intermittently, in the future, after further research, it will be crucial to examine these sources in the same depth as comedy and tragedy will be in this paper. In each of these chapters, I will structure the surveys around four stereotype themes: laziness, loyalty, sexual and material ‘criminality’, and fitness for citizenship, which will include intelligence and courage.

Chapter 1: Comedy's Slaves

“The Athenians do not allow anyone to denigrate or lampoon the people, so that they do not hear themselves called wicked,” writes the Old Oligarch of the city’s comedic plays. “But if an author wishes to lampoon someone specifically, they encourage him, knowing well that it’s unlikely the teased one is a man of the people or of the many, but probably a man of wealth, good birth, or power.”¹⁸ He mentions that a few of the poor, namely social climbers, wandered into the comedians’ crosshairs, and of course Aristophanes had the gumption to poke the democratic beast occasionally, but the Old Oligarch accurately captures what the Athenian people wanted to laugh at the most: the rich and famous, the *kaloï kagathoi*, brought down a peg or two (or three in Cleon’s case). Old Comedy is littered with jokes tailored to that purpose. The Athenians laughed at Cleonymus for being “the most craven shield-dropper,” for example.¹⁹ As fond as the average Athenians were of cutting through aristocratic pretensions, though, they did not delude themselves. They were hardly better. Many of the same jokes directed at the elite are thrown at the audience by Aristophanes’ characters.²⁰ The period’s democratic ethos insisted that all men, except for circumstance, were essentially equal, and Greek Comedy expressed this by passing around abuse and universalising vice.

Elite and lowly citizens are not the only ones levelled by this ethos. Nearly every time a slave and a master share the stage, comedy quickly works to equalise them and to cut

¹⁸ Old Oligarch *Constitution of the Athenians* 2.18: κωμωδεῖν δ’ αὖ καὶ κακῶς λέγειν τὸν μὲν δῆμον οὐκ ἐῷσιν, ἵνα μὴ αὐτοὶ ἀκούωσι κακῶς, ἰδίᾳ δὲ κελεύουσιν, εἴ τις τινα βούλεται, εὖ εἰδότες ὅτι οὐχὶ τοῦ δήμου ἐστὶν οὐδὲ τοῦ πλήθους ὁ κωμωδούμενος ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ, ἀλλ’ ἢ πλούσιος ἢ γενναῖος ἢ δυνάμενος.

¹⁹ Aristophanes *Clouds* 353-4: Κλεώνυμον... τὸν ῥίψασπιν... δειλότατον. Cf. *Wasps* 15-27; *Peace* 670-8, 1295-1304; *Birds* 288-90, 1470-81; *Knights* 1372. See also jokes about Cleisthenes: *Lysistrata* 1092, *Frogs* 48ff, *Clouds* 355, *Knights* 1374, *Acharnians* 118; about Alcibiades: *Wasps* 44-6, *Acharnians* 716.

²⁰ Aristophanes *Peace* 821-3, *Clouds* 1096-1101, *Frogs* 274-6, *Wealth* 98-9

through any pretensions a master might express about his superiority over the slave. The stereotypical slave character is lazy, lusty, and thievish, but no more so than the citizen characters. He is smart, often smarter than his master, and no line of ancient Greek comedy calls into question his humanity. This is not to say that comedy is abolitionist to any significant degree. It offers no manumission scenes, and, as is common among most slaving cultures' entertainment mediums, Greek Comedy's stereotypical slave is unfailingly loyal to his laughable but ultimately *effective* master. The slave might be a little grumpy, but he is otherwise so loving toward his owners that he feels like kin to them and their family. Hence, in Comedy, there are virtually no runaways. While the period's democratic institutions and corresponding ethos inspired a political and social inclusivity for the lower classes of citizens as well as a measure of legal and economic equality for all the social classes, this egalitarianism did not inspire the Greeks to eradicate all social distinctions. It did, however, inspire an insistence on the distinctions being social, not natural, and so perpetual for neither the elites nor the slaves. Therefore authors were not forced to rationalise the perpetuity of enslavement, and so slaves could be portrayed as equal to citizens in every way but circumstance. Masters could be portrayed as being just as bad as their slaves, because their social position was viewed as no more fixed. The Greeks were especially mindful that catastrophe was always right around the corner, ready to plunge a man from the heights of success into utter ruin. As *Andromache*, once a queen and now a slave, says in her namesake play by Euripides, "It is never right to call a mortal blessed before you see the end of his life and how he goes below, having passed through his [final] day."²¹ The Greeks believed that prosperity,

²¹ Euripides *Andromache* 100-3: χρῆ δ' οὔποτ' εἰπεῖν οὐδέν' ὄλβιον βροτῶν, / πρὶν ἂν θανάτῳ τὴν τελευταίαν ἴδῃς / ὅπως περάσας ἡμέραν ἤξει κάτω. Cf. *Trojan Women* 509-10, Solon Fr. 13, 15; Herodotus

woe, and social statuses were fluid.²² So actors in their societies and social hierarchies did not partake in a ‘production of difference’ to the same degree as that which typified the modern colonial states built upon racial slavery and around a “racialised social system.” For democracies especially, and Athens in particular, there was need for a ‘production of similarity’ to facilitate cooperation and empathy among assemblies and juries made up of citizens whose upbringings, ethnic backgrounds, means of living, and classes were wildly disparate. Some of these citizens were ex-slaves or their sons. In their armies and fleets, industries and markets, temples and households, this need for cooperation and mutual empathy extended through to the metics and slaves who worked there alongside, and often at the same jobs, as citizens.

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that comedy portrayed its stereotypical citizens and slaves as essentially equal in virtues, but even more so in their comedic vices. This is a reflection of the democratic social system and the egalitarian ethos that typified fifth century Athens and profoundly influenced the cultures and literature of the following centuries. I will argue that this equalising stereotyping was one means by which the Greeks produced the ‘similarity’ necessary for their democracies to run smoothly, while it also reinforced the ancient Greek slaving ideology whereby slaveholders saw themselves as lenient, self-controlled, and just masters worthy of their slaves’ loyalty. The demonstration will be broken into sections based on the four broad themes which are crucial to comparing slaving ideologies: laziness, loyalty, fitness for citizenship, and criminality.

1.32.9. On Herodotus’ moral agreement with this Solonian maxim, see: Shapiro 1996.

²² Wrenhaven 2012, 64: “The Greeks also had experience of being reduced to slavery themselves, primarily through kidnapping and warfare. As a result, they knew that slavery and freedom were fluid conditions, that slavery was not a preserve of non-Greeks, and that their own freedom should never be taken for granted.”

I. Laziness: Backtalk and Resistance

When it comes to laziness, backtalk, and resistance, Xanthias of Aristophanes' *Frogs* steals the show. The play opens on Dionysus, the wine god, and his slave Xanthias as they are about to sneak their way into the underworld and steal back one of Athens' greatest tragic poets, who will help guide Athens through the last legs of the Peloponnesian War. Xanthias is not excited about this Orphic mission, because he has to lug around his master's baggage, and Dionysus is no less peeved that he has to listen to his slave's constant badgering. "This neck of mine is unlucky three times over!" cries Xanthias. "It's being crushed!" So Dionysus allows his slave to ride his donkey, moaning to the audience, "Isn't this just a load of arrogance and luxury?"²³ Yet even this proves insufficient to quiet the back-talking slave after he overhears Heracles describe the pleasant part of the underworld where the mystery cult initiates go in death. Xanthias seethes at his exclusion from such comfort and throws the baggage to the ground. "I won't take it anymore!"²⁴ Xanthias only resigns himself to carrying it after Dionysus, acquiescing to his slave's begging for a hired replacement, fails to convince a corpse to bear the slave's load to Hades for a fair fee.

So, Xanthias is not a very willing labourer. He is lazy, vocal about it, and does his best to resist his master's demands. More than that, he is stereotypical. He and Dionysus spend the first 20 lines of the play bursting through the fourth wall, discussing just how well-trod Xanthias' luggage-hauling jokes were on the Old Comedy stage. When this

²³ Aristophanes *Frogs* 19-21: **Xan.** ὃ τρισκακοδαίμων ἄρ' ὁ τράχηλος οὐτοσί, / ὅτι θλίβεται... : **Dio.** εἴτ' οὐχ ὕβρις ταῦτ' ἐστὶ καὶ πολλή τρυφή...

²⁴ Ibid. 160: ἀτὰρ οὐ καθέξω ταῦτα τὸν πλείω χρόνον. Perhaps part of Xanthias' frustration at this point in the play stems from the fact that, in Classical Athens, slaves were initiated alongside citizens into the Eleusinian Mysteries, and so his feeling of exclusion—"I'm the donkey leading the mysteries!"—is directed more at the choice of his master than at the necessary reality of his social status. (Konstan 1995, 65; Bremmer 2011, 376; Kamen 2013, 16-7)

slave is told that he cannot liken his load to constipation, he questions the purpose of the prop: “Well then, why do I have to carry this stuff if I’m not going to make any of the [jokes] that Phrynichus, Lycis, and Ameipsias usually make their baggage-carriers [say] in each of their comedies?”²⁵ Aristophanes is toying with a popular trope of Athenian Old Comedy: the lazy, back-talking slave. On the one hand, this is clearly a lampoon of slave resistance.²⁶ On the other, the Athenian audience loved to watch a lowly character push his better’s buttons, at least in part because the average citizen was invited to identify with the subordinated characters and their struggles against authority figures. The *Frogs* certainly extends such an invitation. The play normalises Xanthias’ slacking off and his fits of refusing to work as the sort of action to be expected by anyone in a subservient position. Aristophanes, unlike racist American writers, does not naturalise Xanthias’ laziness as inborn, and he does not pretend that free labourers and slaveholders are any less prone to the avoidance of unpleasant work.²⁷ He also avoids the typical American slaveholder propaganda that slaves work assiduously under the control of their social

²⁵ Aristophanes *Frogs* 12-5: τί δῆτ’ ἔδει με ταῦτα τὰ σκεύη φέρειν, / εἴπερ ποιήσω μηδὲν ὄνπερ Φρύνιχος / εἶωθε ποιεῖν καὶ Λύκις κάμεινιάς / σκεύη φέρουσ’ ἐκάστοτ’ ἐν κωμῳδίᾳ; Line 15 had once been excised as an interpolation, and this is the case with Hall and Geldart’s 1907 edition of the text, utilised by the Perseus Project. I have followed Henderson’s edition of the text used for the 2002 Loeb volume, Aristophanes IV, which retains line 15.

²⁶ Callahan and Horsley 1998, 139: “The ancient as well as the modern stereotype of slaves as lazy and dishonest reflects deliberate slave behaviour such as working slowly or badly, pilfering crops or tools, ... sabotaging the work process or product, ...breakingof tools[, and] work slowdowns.” Cf. Bradley 1990, 140; McKeown 2011, 159-65.

²⁷ On inborn laziness concerning Black folk, consider how Carolus Linnaeus assigned laziness as one of the exclusive racial characteristic of the *Homo Africanus*, writing in his taxonomy that the African is “black, phlegmatic, a slacker... sly, slothful, and negligent,” as opposed to the *Homo Europaeus*, who is “white, ruddy, muscular... gentle, wisest, and a discoverer.” *Niger, phlegmaticus, laxus... Vafer, segnīs, negligens, versus: albus, sanguineus, torosus...Levis, acutissimus, inventor.* (Linnaeus 1758, 21-2)

bettters.²⁸ This is borne out by how Dionysus acts when he switches roles with Xanthias and by how citizen rowers act toward their commanders: precisely like the slave.

When citizens man the oars of Athens' triremes, a job which many citizens shared with the city's slaves, they turn out to be just as unruly as Xanthias. During the play's contest between the tragedians Aeschylus and Euripides, the former levels the accusation that "You taught them to pursue blabbing and gossip... and persuaded the crews of the *Paralus* to contradict their commanders!" Indeed, adds Dionysus, "now a sailor talks back and, no longer rowing, sails the ship all over the place."²⁹ We can be certain Aristophanes here references citizens, because, as Thucydides explains, only citizens were crew on the *Paralus*, Athens' sacred flagship.³⁰ This recognition of a common, human proclivity for resisting others' orders to work stems, in my opinion, from the social and physical proximity that citizens had to slaves while on board ships. In order to tend to possessions and political matters around the Aegean, "it is necessary that an oft-sailing man himself, alongside his slave, man an oar," as the Old Oligarch explains, "and that they together learn nautical jargon. They both become excellent steersmen through their experience of sailing and through practice."³¹ Moreover, experiencing the same work as rower-slaves and the same frustrations with it allowed Athenian citizens to readily empathise with the

²⁸ As will be seen in Chapter 3, American planter-authored novels and travelogues nearly always present the Black men and women living on plantations as happily industrious. See, for example, Tucker [1824] 1970, 1.67-8, where "properly brought up" slaves work as, if not more, willingly than paid labourers.

²⁹ Aristophanes *Frogs* 1069, 1071-6: **Aes.** λαλιὰν ἐπιτηδεῦσαι καὶ στωμυλίαν ἐδίδαξας... καὶ τοὺς Παράλους ἀνέπεισεν / ἀνταγορεύειν τοῖς ἄρχουσιν. ...**Dio.** νῦν δ' ἀντιλέγει κούκέτ' ἐλαύνων πλεῖ δευρὶ καῦθις ἐκεῖσε.

³⁰ Thucydides 8.75.5

³¹ Old Oligarch 1.19-20: ἀνάγκη γὰρ ἄνθρωπον πολλὰκις πλέοντα κόπην λαβεῖν καὶ αὐτὸν καὶ τὸν οἰκέτην, καὶ ὀνόματα μαθεῖν τὰ ἐν τῇ ναυτικῇ: καὶ κυβερνητὰ ἀγαθοὶ γίνονται δι' ἐμπειρίαν τε τῶν πλόων καὶ διὰ μελέτην.

slaves, and hence to develop stereotypes about themselves and slaves which stressed similarity in attitudes toward and avoidance of labour, especially rowing.

In the *Frogs* this ‘avoidance similarity’ extends beyond the mortal plane. Dionysus and Xanthias practically become twins at Hades’ and Persephone’s palace, both rascals doing everything they can to undermine the other, land him in trouble, and, most importantly, leave him to deal with the unpleasant tasks. When Dionysus and Xanthias arrive at Hades’ palace, Dionysus swaps his Heracles costume with Xanthias’ clothes because he fears a beating from the gatekeeper Aeacus, but the god reassumes his divine position at the first sniff of a warm reception. He chastises Xanthias for getting his hopes up: “Isn’t it foolish and pretentious to think that you, a slave and a mortal, could be Alcmene’s son?”³² In retribution, Xanthias does his best to help along the souring of this situation. “Somebody’s in trouble,” he laughs when the palace staff ‘recognises’ Heracles, who ate them out of house and home during his last visit, and this slave assures the staff that they have the right man.³³ Thanks to Xanthias’ undermining of his master, the staff leaves to summon the politician Cleon to punish ‘Heracles’, and so Dionysus wants to trade places with Xanthias again. The slave resists—“Shut up! Stop talking! I won’t become Heracles again! ...For how could *I* become Alcmene’s son, being both a slave and mortal?”³⁴ Dionysus’ pretentious dismissal of Xanthias’ value earlier comes back to bite him, and the slave’s words so drip with hurt feelings that Dionysus has to resort to begging, just as Xanthias had earlier, in order to get his slave to cease resistance. No act is too shameful

³² Aristophanes *Frogs* 530-1: τὸ δὲ προσδοκῆσαι σ’ οὐκ ἀνόητον καὶ κενὸν / ὡς δοῦλος ὢν καὶ θνητὸς Ἀλκμήνης ἔσει;

³³ *Ibid.* 552: κακὸν ἦκει τινί.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 580, 582-3: παῦε παῦε τοῦ λόγου. ...καὶ πῶς ἂν Ἀλκμήνης ἐγὼ / υἱὸς γενοίμην δοῦλος ἅμα καὶ θνητὸς ὢν;

or ‘slavish’ for this master, as long as he avoids an unpleasant job: “Look, I know that you’re mad, and rightly so, and if you strike me, I won’t hold it against you. But if I ever rob you in the future, utterly may I, my wife, and my children die the worst kind of death!”³⁵ Dionysus’ desperate pleading wins Xanthias over, though the slave is under no illusion that his master will keep a promise, even one sworn so solemnly. In an exchange with the chorus, he sings, “If something good comes along, he’ll try to steal the costume back from me. I know that well.”³⁶

Unfortunately for Xanthias, instead of something good coming along, Aeacus explodes onto the stage to arrest ‘Heracles’, the “dog thief” (τὸν κυνοκλόπον). Dionysus relishes being the spectator this time, and he mimics Xanthias’ earlier traitorous assistance of the palace staff, even leading off with the exact same phrase that the slave had. “Somebody’s in trouble,” he cackles before egging on the irate Aeacus.³⁷ As Xanthias and Dionysus both try to avoid trouble, the situation devolves into a whipping contest for Aeacus to determine who is the god and who is the slave. After a series of beatings and covered-up cries of pain from both contestants, Aeacus admits, “By Demeter, I can’t figure out which of you is the god.”³⁸ The slave and his master act so similarly that they are indistinguishable. Both of them are rascals, all too willing to sacrifice the other so as not to deal with arduous or painful situations. In terms of laziness and avoiding or resisting work, Aristophanes could not have presented a master and slave more alike.³⁹

³⁵ Ibid. 584-8: οἶδ’ οἶδ’ ὅτι θυμοῖ, καὶ δικαίως αὐτὸ δρᾶς· / κἄν εἴ με τύπτεις, οὐκ ἂν ἀντίποιμί σοι. / ἀλλ’ ἦν σε τοῦ λοιποῦ ποτ’ ἀφέλωμαι χρόνου, / πρόρριζος αὐτός, ἢ γυνή, τὰ παιδιά, / κάκιστ’ ἀπολοίμην.

³⁶ Ibid. 599-601: ἦν χρηστὸν ἢ τι, / ταῦτ’ ἀφαιρεῖσθαι πάλιν πειράσεται / μ’ εὖ οἶδ’ ὅτι.

³⁷ Ibid. 606: ἦκει τῷ κακόν.

³⁸ Ibid. 666-7: οὐ τοι μὰ τὴν Δήμητρα δύναμαι πῶ μαθεῖν / ὁπότερος ὑμῶν ἐστὶ θεός.

³⁹ David Konstan’s reading of *Frogs* in *Greek Comedy and Ideology* explains away this similarity by arguing that the play follows a “linear progression” modelled on the Eleusinian Mysteries’ initiation ritual.

Another aspect of Aristophanes' universalised laziness is that almost all of his characters seem to have trouble staying awake. His *Wasps* opens on the slaves Xanthias and Sosias, who have been tasked during the night with guarding their house's exits against the escape of their master, Philocleon. His son, Bdelycleon, has staged an intervention into his father's jury-service addiction, and he needs the house's slaves to help lock up Philocleon for his own good. In the first line of the play Sosias upbraids Xanthias for sleeping on the job. "Hey! Xanthias! What do you think you're doing, knave?" "I'm learning to break up the night watch," replies the groggy slave. "I just want to sleep off my worries for a little while." Sosias yawns and admits, "A sweet bit of sleep is being poured over my eyes too."⁴⁰ After the household deals with Philocleon's first escape attempt, Sosias' only thought is of napping. "Since we've scared him off," asks the slave, "why don't we catch a little shut-eye, even just a drop?"⁴¹ Bdelycleon denies the request and insists that he and Sosias take up watch duty, but the master-slave duo

Dionysus therefore starts the play in "the individual heroic mode of transcendence represented by Heracles," but at the gates of Hades' palace Dionysus enters into a "liminal state" representative of "Athens itself" going through a "confusion of status categories" after the recent enfranchisement of slave rowers who fought at the Battle of Arginusae. (Konstan 1995, 66-71) I feel that Konstan's reading turns the first half of the play into a mere set-up for the *parabasis* and its appeal to reintroduce the oligarchic partisans into political life. Xanthias and Dionysus' "levelling" becomes a short-term phenomenon: Dionysus loses his identity and regains it by the end of the plot. This surely exaggerates the brevity of Dionysus and Xanthias' similarity as well as its uniqueness in the corpus of Aristophanes, as will become increasingly clear over the course of this chapter. I feel Konstan overstates Dionysus' position at the beginning of the play by failing to mention that Xanthias has already usurped the god's donkey, which signifies that the "social inversion" which Konstan locates in the middle of the plot has already begun before the actors arrive on stage. While I agree that Aristophanes is wrestling with a "confusion of social categories" in *Frogs*, that wrestling is a principal theme in many of his plays. It is a long-term confusion, and while the enfranchisement after Arginusae is likely the impetus for the large amount of the play devoted to Dionysus and Xanthias' antics, the basic form of their similarity is prefigured by the master-slave relationships in *Wasps*, *Clouds*, *Peace*, and *Acharnians*. The "levelling" of master and slave is part of an active 'production of similarity' by those learning to accept new ex-slave citizens into the body politics as well as part of the Comedic genre itself, which joins together the community in ritualised performances and revelry that stress commonality, born out of a "profoundly egalitarian and utopian impulse." (Konstan 1995, 8)

⁴⁰ Aristophanes *Wasps* 1-2, 5-7: **Sos.** Οὗτος τί πάσχεις ὃ κακόδαιμον Ξανθία; **Xan.** φυλακὴν καταλύειν νυκτερινὴν διδάσκομαι. ... **Xan.** ἀλλ' ἐπιθυμῶ σμικρὸν ἀπομερμηρίσαι. **Sos.** ... καὶ τοῦ γ' ἐμοῦ / κατὰ τοῖν κόραιν ὕπνου τι καταχεῖται γλυκύ.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 211-3: ἐπειδὴ τουτονὶ σεσοβήκαμεν, ... τί οὐκ ἀπεκοιμήθημεν ὅσον ὅσον στίλιν;

fare no better. They immediately doze off and sleep through the chorus of wasps' entrance and their duet with Philocleon, who warns them, "Don't shout! My son happens to be sleeping out front."⁴² Ultimately the old man does wake them and gets trapped inside again. Like his slaves and son, Philocleon is also prone to sleep. As addicted to court cases as he is, sleep still manages to creep up on him while judging, so, for the mock case which Bdelycleon sets up in order to wean his father from the real thing, a rooster has to be provided "so that, if you nod off during some defense, this guy, crowing from above, will wake you up."⁴³ In fact, one of the key propositions with which Bdelycleon entices Philocleon into remaining home and managing domestic affairs is that he will be able to sleep in. "No legislator will shut you out of court," he claims, "even if you rouse at noon." "I like the sound of that!" says his father.⁴⁴ Hence both the slaves and their masters are portrayed as identically susceptible to sleep in the face of boring tasks. Wanting to sleep instead of work is laziness stereotypical of both free and enslaved characters.

This citizen-slave sleepiness equivalency is also mined for laughs in Aristophanes' *Clouds*. This play opens when the characters ought to be getting out of bed. "Even though I heard the rooster a while ago," complains the crotchety and too-stressed-to-sleep protagonist Strepsiades, "the servants are snoring away."⁴⁵ His son is no better. Strepsiades complains that "this noble son of mine doesn't stir in the night, but farts

⁴² Ibid. 33-7: οὐμὸς υἱός, ἀλλὰ μὴ βοᾷτε: καὶ γὰρ τυγχάνει / οὐτοσὶ πρόσθεν καθεύδων.

⁴³ Ibid. 816-7: ἵνα γ', ἦν καθεύδης ἀπολογουμένου τινός, / ἄδων ἄνωθεν ἐξεγείρη σ' οὐτοσί.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 774-6: **Phil.** κἄν ἔγρη μεσημβρινός, / οὐδεὶς σ' ἀποκλήσει θεσμοθέτης τῆ κιγκλίδι. **Bde.** τουτί μ' ἀρέσκει.

⁴⁵ Aristophanes *Clouds* 4-5: καὶ μὴν πάλαι γ' ἀλεκτρονόος ἤκουσ' ἐγὼ / οἱ δ' οἰκέται ρέγκουσιν.

away, swaddled in five blankets!”⁴⁶ Deflated, and not wanting to be left out, Strepsiades tries to join the lazy morning, declaring, “If it seems good to them, let’s bundle up and snore.”⁴⁷ Notably, once anxiety prods Strepsiades from his bed again, at least one of his servants is up and ready to serve when he demands, “Boy, fetch a lamp and bring out my writing tablet.”⁴⁸ His son, Pheidippides, is a good deal more sluggish. When his father’s grouchy tallying of debts wakes him, he grumbles, “Sir, let me sleep some more.” Strepsiades sighs, “Sure, you sleep, but know that all these debts are going to fall on your shoulders!”⁴⁹ Strepsiades still needs to coax his son out of bed some 40 lines later. Pheidippides is no better than his sleeping slaves. They both sleep in so as to avoid and resist the demands of Strepsiades, something the slaves would not normally be able to do, insists the master. “Go to hell, War!” he exclaims, “For many reasons, but [chiefly] that I’m not allowed to punish my slaves.”⁵⁰ Regular Spartan incursions into Attic territory, their fortification of Decelea, and Athens’ hostile relations with neighbouring Boeotia and Megara proffered ample opportunity for a slave to run away and, to the chagrin of the Athenian war machine, to man the enemy fleets. So, in the context of war, the slaves take advantage of the circumstance to resist their summons to work, sure, like Pheidippides, that they are safe from punishment. In fact, Pheidippides’ conduct works to normalise the slaves’ laziness: whenever anyone has the opportunity to slack off, sleep in, and avoid the day’s work, Aristophanes seems to insist, he will capitalise on it.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 8-10: οὐδ’ ὁ χρηστός οὐτοσὶ νεανίας / ἐγείρεται τῆς νυκτός, ἀλλὰ πέρδεται / ἐν πέντε σισύραις ἐγκεκορδυλημένος.

⁴⁷ Ibid. 11: ἀλλ’ εἰ δοκεῖ ῥέγκωμεν ἐγκεκαλυμμένοι.

⁴⁸ Ibid. 18-19: ἅπτε παῖ λύχνον, / κάφερε τὸ γραμματεῖον.

⁴⁹ Ibid. 38-40: **Phei.** ἔασον ὃ δαιμόνιε καταδαρθεῖν τί με. / **Str.** σὺ δ’ οὖν κάθειυδε: τὰ δὲ χρέα ταῦτ’ ἴσθ’ ὅτι / ἐς τὴν κεφαλὴν ἅπαντα τὴν σὴν τρέψεται.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 6-7: ἀπόλοιο δῆτ’ ὃ πόλεμε πολλῶν οὔνεκα, / ὅτ’ οὐδὲ κολάσ’ ἔξεστί μοι τοὺς οἰκέτας.

Laziness and resistance to work become less universalised after the era of Old Comedy. Fourth and third century comedic poets wrote in a more moralising fashion, with more clear-cut ‘good’ and ‘bad’ characters, and laziness is one of the rubrics by which these characters are distinguished, while social status hardly factors at all. This appears to be the strategy of the third century comedic poet Herodas, who begins his eighth *mimiamb* by tapping into the same old slaves-sleeping-in stereotype. In fact, it is practically all that is left of the original text. The text’s just-awoken master character is exasperated with two of his ‘lazy’ slaves. “Get up, slave! ... The pigs are dying of thirst,” he tells one of the sleepers, “but you’d stay in bed until the sun, inching into the room, warmed up your butt.” Another slave is told to get to her wool work, which the master claims she has recently neglected, and when a sleepy slave “grumbles” about the rude awakening, the master threatens to “come over there and soften up your skull with my staff!”⁵¹ ‘Bad’ slaves in this sketch need punishment and prodding to motivate them to work, a readily understandable trope of slaving ideology that justifies masters’ driving of slaves by holding that, without masters’ attentiveness, ‘bad’ slaves’ work would go undone. The trope also has the ideological benefit of portraying masters as busy. As an American planter smilingly told the traveller Frederick Law Olmsted in the late 1850s, after their breakfast had been repeatedly interrupted by slaves needing the planter’s attention, “a farmer’s life... is no sinecure.”⁵² The similarity to antebellum constructions of Black laziness should not be overstated.⁵³ Herodas’ master character does not impute all slaves

⁵¹ Herodas 8.1-9: Ἄστηθι, δούλη... τὴν δὲ χοῖρον ἀὐονὴ δρύπτει• / ἢ προσμενεῖς σύ, μέχρι σευ ἥλιος θάλλη / [τὸν κ]υσὸν ἐσδύς. ... [τὸν]θρυζε... μέχρι σευ παραστά[σα] / [τὸ] βρέγμα τῷ σκίπωνι μαλθακὸν θῶμα[ι].

⁵² Olmsted [1856] 1968, 44

⁵³ Antebellum plantation novels, for instance, rarely present slaveholders’ estates in the way Herodas does, with several ‘bad’ slaves and a singular or few ‘good’ ones. In George Tucker’s *Valley of Shenandoah*, there are absolutely no ‘badly behaved’ slaves whatsoever. In John Kennedy’s *Swallow Barn*, there is only

with laziness, and he in fact employs a ‘good’ one named Anna, who does not “nourish childish thoughts” like the others.⁵⁴ It is significant that Herodas uses the phrase ‘childish thoughts’ (νη[πίας] φρένας) instead of ‘slavish thoughts’ (δουλικός φρένας), because, as will be seen in Herodas’ third *mimiamb*, the sort of laziness and need to be driven runs all the way up the social ladder. Avoidance is not a habit exclusive to any one class. In the third *mimiamb*, the mother of a citizen boy is furious that he refuses to hunker down and work through his grammar assignments. He needs a flogging.

Metrotime, the distressed mother, drags her son Kottalos to his schoolmaster and demands that the teacher “skin this boy’s shoulder, until his wicked soul is left only on his lips.”⁵⁵ She complains that the boy has become an obsessive gambler, a lifestyle she attaches to bad, runaway slaves (δρηπέται). These δρηπέται have evidently influenced Kottalos’ response to unpleasant work, for, when his family tries to force him to do his homework, the boy runs away to his grandmother’s house for a few days, or he climbs out of his family’s sight and “sits on top of the roof, stretching his legs just like some monkey hanging down.”⁵⁶ The schoolmaster agrees with Kottalos’ mother about the need to beat the boy into obedience, and the teacher laughs, “But you’re so toilsome, Kottalos, that nobody would praise you, even while auctioning you off!”⁵⁷ The citizen boy is

one ‘bad’ slave, who dies once divorced from the plantation. In William Caruther’s *Kentuckian in New-York*, there is also just one ‘bad’ slave, a disgruntled driver. The ideological strategy of these portrayals is to present plantations as the ideal settings for Black folk, the work as ideally suited to them, and the masters’ use of slaves as benevolent and victimless. This idyllic plantation stereotyping is generally directed at abolitionists and others who have misgivings over the harsh treatment slaves receive at the hands of slaveholders. When that is less of a concern, in Southern slave management debates, for example, Black slaves are often said to be universally lazy as a racial characteristic, justifying that harsh treatment and violent driving of the slaves. Sc. Olmsted [1856] 1968, 572

⁵⁴ Herodas 8.14-5: Ἀννᾶ... οὐ γὰρ νη[πίας] φρένας βόσκεις.

⁵⁵ Herodas 3.3-4: τοῦτον κατ’ ὤμου δεῖρον, ἄχρῃς ἢ ψυχῇ / αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ χειλέων μούνον ἢ κακῇ λειφοῦν.

⁵⁶ Ibid. 3.40-1: ἦ τοῦ τέγευς ὑπερθε τὰ σκέλεα τείνας / κάθητ’ ὄκως τις καλλίης κάτω κύπτων.

⁵⁷ Ibid. 3.74-5: ἀλλ’ εἰς πονηρός, Κότταλ’, ὦ[σ]τε καὶ περνάς / οὐδεὶς σ’ ἐπαινέσειεν.

equated with slaves so ‘bad’ that they are unadvertisable. This shows that Herodas does not privilege the citizen class’ work ethic as innately superior to that of slaves, certainly not in the way that American slaveholders presented themselves as naturally more diligent than Black folk.⁵⁸ There are ‘bad apples’ in all the classes of Herodas’ characters that need a firm hand in order to motivate them to work. The poet’s moralising approach ‘produces similarity’ through this vice.

The fourth century comedic poet Menander operates similarly, pinning laziness to both slave and citizen characters as a marker of vice, and diligence as a sign of virtue. Class and ethnicity are not determinative of these character traits.⁵⁹ Menander’s *Farmer* is exemplary of this, including an industrious slave named Daos who contrasts other lazy and resisting slaves with a poor but hardworking citizen boy. Daos enters the play as he “approaches from the farm, having chopped a bunch of wood.”⁶⁰ He and his fellow-slave Syros rather cheerfully carry their loads, admire the farm scenery, but they do not tarry, punctuating the end of their work by saying, “Let’s carry this stuff inside.”⁶¹ On his way in, Daos is met by a pair of women, including an old citizen woman. He has good news regarding her son, who managed to put his rich employer, Daos’ master, in his debt. Daos explains:

⁵⁸ In George Tucker’s *Valley of Shenandoah*, for instance, the young planter protagonist Edward Grayson proven to be naturally diligent through his studies at law school. At school he is neither “stimulated by wine, nor adulterated by gaming,” and he allows no love affairs to disrupt “the quiet prosecution of his studies.” His professors praise him for his “most exalted character,” and this excellence is all entirely self-motivated, while the industriousness of his slaves was presented earlier in the novel as the result of being “properly brought up” and provided with liquor during harvest season. (Tucker [1824] 1970, 1.67-8 , 2.50, 2.55, 2.155)

⁵⁹ On Menander’s classless morality, see: Lape 2004, 135. “All men are held accountable to the same moral standards irrespective of their socioeconomic status. [Menander] neutralizes wealth’s ability to operate as a positive social advantage by portraying the human condition as inherently egalitarian.”

⁶⁰ Menander *The Farmer* 31-2:

⁶¹ Ibid. 39-40: εἰσένεγγ' ὄμως / ὅσ' ἄν φέρωμεν.

ἐνταῦθα χρείας γενομένης αὐτῷ τινος
 κηδεμ[ό]νος, οἱ μὲν οἰκέται καὶ βάρβ[αρ]οί,
 ἐφ' οἷς ἐκεῖνός ἐστιν, οἰμώζειν μ[ακ]ρὰν
 ἔλ[ε]γον ἅπαντες, ὁ δὲ σὸς υἱός, οἶον [εἰ
 νομίσας ἑαυτοῦ πατέρα, ποιήσας [ἄ] δεῖ,
 ἤλειφεν, ἐξέτριβεν, ἀπένιζεν, φαγεῖν
 προσέφερ[ε], παρεμυθεῖτο.

When [the master] had a need for some caretaker,
 the servants, in whose care that man was,
 were barbarians, and they all chose to damn him
 to hell, but your son, as though he thought the man
 was his own father, did the things that were necessary:
 rubbed on lotion, washed and towelled him off, fetched
 meals, and comforted him.⁶²

In just a few lines, Menander presents us with a jumble of morally construed characters, contrasted by work ethic and not by social station. Daos, a loyal and productive slave whose namesakes are typically Phrygian, here reports on the admirable work ethic of a young citizen and the deplorable one belonging to the other *barbarian* slaves. With respect to this ethical contrast, it should be noted that by the time of Euripides' plays, some 70 years before Menander began to compete, the term *barbarian* had begun to take on the ethical connotation that English implies with the word *barbarous*. Even scholars like Timothy Long, who argues that “racial prejudice—the raw intuition that the barbarian is inferior”—was a major element of Greek Comedy, concede that by the time of Menander's New Comedy, *barbarian* came to have a “new use,” an “ethical one,” now “less of a national designation and more of an attribute embodying several undesirable characteristics.”⁶³ Given that Daos is likely Phrygian, his impugning the servants here should not be read as racial.⁶⁴ He is simply calling them *rascals*, *scoundrels*, *good-for-*

⁶² Ibid. 55-9.

⁶³ Long 1986, 151-2; Hall 1989, 219-23

⁶⁴ Compare him with the *Sheild's* Daos, who is certainly Phrygian.

nothings. What is more interesting about this passage is that a citizen boy, an admittedly poor one, gladly takes over the duties meant to be performed by slaves, and his initiative in plugging himself into a slave's position is praised. The boy's readiness for work in *The Farmer* likens him to the only other industrious characters introduced in the play: the *good* slaves. Surely this construction of citizen-slave similarity was facilitated by the reality of regularly and casually hired citizen labourers working on richer citizens' estates alongside the owners' slaves.⁶⁵

In Menander's *Grouch (Dyskolos)*, the poet is slightly less generous to his citizen protagonist. When the young urban suitor Sostratos first tries to secure the marriage of a farmer's daughter, that grouchy farmer and his son Gorgias are left unimpressed by Sostratos and his "leisure" (σχολήν). Gorgias and his slave Daos humour the boy and allow him to try and prove that he is industrious by working in the farmer's field "like a labourer." He does not last long, immediately complaining about the pain in his "loins, back, neck; in short, the whole body."⁶⁶ He suggests to Gorgias that he take the rest of the day off, and hands the work back to Daos, whose industrious outlook is "to get the most work done possible on that day."⁶⁷ Sostratos is by no means presented as a totally immoral character, but his lack of work ethic is presented as a vice that he ought to combat in order to connect with the poorer farming family into which he desires to marry. Like in Herodas 8, laziness in Menander's plays is a rubric by which to judge characters, and the division neither cleaves all the slaves from the free, nor insists its distinction is inborn. Herodas' Kottalos seems to have been influenced into laziness by his runaway,

⁶⁵ E. M. Wood 1988, 64-80; Silver 2006

⁶⁶ Menander *Dyskolos* 523-7: ὃ τρισκακοδαίμων, ὡς ἔχω / ὀσφῦν, μετάφρενον, τὸν τράχηλον, ἐνὶ λόγῳ / ὄλον τὸ σῶμ' ... ὡς ἂν ἐργάτης.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 371-2: βούλομαι / ὡς πλεῖστον ἡμᾶς ἐργάσασθαι τήμερον.

gambler peers, and Menander's Sostratos seems as though he will slowly develop a better work ethic under the influence of Gorgias. The elasticity of these comedians' conception of laziness contrasts strongly with the way in which laziness and Blackness were entwined by 19th century American proslavery and segregationist ideologues, as will be shown in Chapter 3.

Greek Old Comedy generally universalises laziness. Slaves are lazy. Masters are lazy. Few characters have the discipline necessary to make it through their duties without some napping, and it is rare to find a character that does not try to weasel his way out of unpleasant tasks. The later comedians are more interested in making distinctions between characters, and they tend to do so along moral lines, between people of good and bad characteristics, but the possibility for personal change is never ruled out. These authors did not present social status as determinative of laziness, and in doing so they neither idealised the master class nor demonised the slave one. Rather, they 'produced similarity' among them by portraying them as sharing in a common, often lazy, and ultimately mutable humanity.

II. Loyalty: Friendship and Family

Considering all the fuss that Old Comedy's slaves kick up when they are ordered to get to work, it is surprising that running away seems to be a complete non-starter. At the beginning of Aristophanes' *Knights*, the 'slave' protagonists, Nicias and Demosthenes, at least consider the possibility after they have received the latest in a long line of unwarranted beatings from their master due to the scheming of the Paphlagonian, the paper-thin cypher for the politician Cleon. When they joke about running away, Nicias

muses, “Isn’t it absolute ecstasy?”⁶⁸ Demosthenes worries that the plan will result in a skin-ruining whipping, so they “ought to plan along some other line.”⁶⁹ Ultimately they decide to win their way back into their master’s good graces, rather than attempt an escape. They just want the household to get back to the way it used to be.

While it is possible to read this scene as an example of how slaveholders presented slaves as lacking in courage and therefore naturally suited to their station, I think that the Greek comedies present a different motivation for the slaves’ sticking around: they have been made part of the family and have a stake in its wellbeing. In Athens, domestic slaves, like those who dominate the comic stage, were welcomed into the household by the same ritual with which a wife entered it: the *καταχύσματα*. The household made its ‘outsider’ an ‘insider’ ritually.⁷⁰ Therefore the slave characters’ loyalty to and frustration with their masters takes on a familial dimension in Comedy. The slave Getas in Menander’s *Dyskolos* encapsulates this theme perfectly when, with first person pronouns, he complains that, because of a marriage, “now *we’re* related to him”—Knemon, the misanthrope—“and he’s become part of *our* household.”⁷¹ There’s a good deal of paternalism in these portrayals. Slaves rebel, only like teenagers, against their ‘fathers,’ and worry after their health if their masters’ hair has already greyed. They are supportive ‘brothers’ during a crisis, and serve as their masters’ brothers-in-arms. When they are

⁶⁸ Aristophanes *Knights* 29: ἀλλ’ ἐτέρῳ πῆ σκεπτέον.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 35: ἐτέρῳ πῆ σκεπτέον.

⁷⁰ Demosthenes 45.74; Aristophanes *Wealth* 764-9; Harpocration, *Lexicon in decem oratores Atticos*, s.v. *καταχύσματα*: “Demosthenes in his speech against Stephanos (45) says that masters pour over their newly-bought slaves dried fruits/sweatmeats... and these are poured over the bridal pair (τῶν νυμφίων), as Theopompus in his Hedycharos says.” (Golden 2011, 136-7)

⁷¹ Menander *Dyskolos* 903-4: κηδεύομεν γὰρ αὐτῷ, / οἰκεῖος ἡμῖν γίνετ’.

entrusted with the care-taking of a household heir, they reflect with pride on how well their ‘sons’ have turned out, and mourn for them as for a loved one.

In Aristophanes’ *Peace*, the nameless slave tries to stop Trygaeus’ insane, beetle-riding trip to Olympus. Trygaeus simply tells him to shut up. “I won’t shut up! No way, no how!” responds the slave in genuine concern. “Not if you don’t tell me where you’re planning to fly off to.” When Trygaeus tells him that he’s going to Olympus to interrogate Zeus, the slave, worried he will not come back in one piece, tells him, “Over my dead body, by Dionysus!” Trygaeus is undeterred, so the slave aligns himself with the children of the household, trading concern for a fear of abandonment. “Children, get out here!” calls the slave. “Your father is sneaking off to heaven, leaving you all alone.”⁷² In the end, Trygaeus manages to persuade his children and slave to let him soar off. As he does so, the slave scuttles the children offstage while a daughter worries about Trygaeus falling from his beetle and becoming the sort of cripple that “provides Euripides with a story.”⁷³ The slave’s concern for his master parallels a daughter’s concern for the welfare of her father.

In the *Wasps*, the slaves Xanthias and Sosias ally with Philocleon’s son against this head of the family. They are part of the households’ ‘brotherhood’, and their efforts to intervene into their master’s jury-court addiction run parallel to Bdelycleon’s desire to cure his father’s affliction. They are at once trusted siblings and possess a significant degree of filial devotion. After all, like the “barbarians” that Daos condemns in Menander’s *Farmer*, they could have opted to shirk their duties.

⁷² Aristophanes *Knights* 95-112

⁷³ Ibid. *Peace* 147-8: εἴτα χολῶς ὦν Εὐριπίδη / λόγον παράσχης.

A ‘fatherly devotion’ typifies the Daos who orchestrates most of the plot twists in Menander’s *Shield*. This play opens with Daos trudging onto the stage, returning from a military expedition to Lycia, dragging in tow the spear-won booty of his presumed-dead master, Kleostratos, whom he refers to as a “nursling” (τρόφιμος). It is quite the haul, too: “six hundred gold staters, a fair amount of wine-cups, and a throng of captives.”⁷⁴ Later in the play a Thracian waiter cannot believe how loyal Daos is. “You moron! You had so much gold, so many slaves, but you came back to your master carrying these things instead of running away! Where are you from?” Daos replies, “Phrygia.” The waiter then drops one of the most ethnically charged jokes found in Menander: “So you’re a good-for-nothing, an effete. We Thracians alone are men, and especially the Getans, by Apollo. Oh, how manly our tribe is! That’s why the grain-mills are full of us.”⁷⁵ Daos just rolls his eyes and shoos the waiter away. He does not feel the need to explain himself, because his close and loving relationship with his master and household had been amply expressed in the monologue with which he opened the play.⁷⁶ The death of Kleostratos is a severe blow for Daos, because, the slave explains, his hopes for future ‘retirement’ revolved around the success of his ward, and his devotion had grown over the years he had spent proudly shaping and guiding the young Kleostratos to excellence. Daos actually takes the loss rather well. By contrast, in the much later *Ephesian Tale* by Xenophon of Ephesus (2nd century AD), the young protagonist is kidnapped by pirates and his παιδαγωγός, also referred to by the more honorific τροφεύς (foster-father), swims

⁷⁴ Menander *Shield* 34-7: χρυσοῦς τινας / ἑξακοσίους, ποτήρι' ἐπιεικῶς συχνά, / τῶν τ' αἰχμαλώτων τοῦτον ὄν ὀρθῶς πλησίον / ὄχλον.

⁷⁵ Ibid. *Shield* 239-45: **Τρα.** ἀπόπληκτε· χρυσίο[ν] / ἔχων τοσοῦτο, παῖδας, ἤκεις δεσπότη / ταῦτ' ἀποκομίζων, κοῦκ ἀπέδρας· ποταπός π[οτ' εἶ;] / **Δαο.** Φρύξ. **Τρα.** οὐδὲν ἱερόν· ἀνδρόγυνος, ἡμεῖς μόνοι / οἱ Θρακῆς ἔσμεν ἄνδρες· οἱ μὲν δὴ Γέται, / Ἀπολλων, ἀνδρεῖον τὸ χρῆμα. τοιγαροῦν / γέμουσιν οἱ μυλῶνες ἡμῶν.

⁷⁶ Menander *Shield* 1-18

after the ship, calling, “What life is there for me without you?” When he cannot catch the pirates’ trireme, he “gives himself over to the waves and dies.”⁷⁷ Daos is not so exaggerated, but the *Ephesian Tale* helps to contextualise the stereotypical closeness of the bond between the caretaker slave and his ward, and how the relationship could take on a parental dimension.⁷⁸ This is especially true for Daos and Kleostratos since the latter’s father is absent from Menander’s play, dead already. This ‘foster-father’ characterisation is driven home by the keen, fatherly interest Daos takes in the marriage of Kleostratos’ sister. To save her from having to marry her elderly uncle, Daos orchestrates a cunning plan to land her in an age-appropriate and loving matrimony. “By Athena,” proclaims Daos, “the deed’s worth striving after.”⁷⁹ This ‘parental’ relationship is not one-sided, and Kleostratos too feels love for his aging tutor. When he enters the play, some of his first, unfortunately fragmentary, words are: “If Daos escaped, I’d consider myself the luckiest [man in the world]!”⁸⁰ Once Daos recognises his master, he embraces his nursling (ἔχω σε) before filling him in on the cunning plan that’s underway.

The devotion of a παιδαγωγός should probably not be taken as paradigmatic of all slave characters’ loyalties, since this care-taker slave occupies a more privileged position within his household than the average domestic, one more likely to breed goodwill. Real παιδαγωγοί were typically invested with actual authority over the household’s children and were given quite a bit of license to exercise that authority. For example, if the children acted poorly or got distracted, the παιδαγωγός might beat them with a strap or

⁷⁷ Xenophon of Ephesus 1.14.5: “τί γάρ ἐστί μοι ζῆν ἄνευ σοῦ;” Ταῦτα ἔλεγε... παραδοῦς ἑαυτὸν τοῖς κύμασιν ἀπέθανε.

⁷⁸ Another excellent example of this parental closeness can be found in Euripides’ *Ion*, which will be discussed at length in the next chapter. Sc. lines 733-5.

⁷⁹ Menander *Shield* 318-9: καὶ μὴν ἄξιον φιλονικίας, / νῆ τὴν Ἀθηνᾶν, τοῦργον.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* 496-8: εἰ δ’ αὖ διαπ[εσὼν] / ὁ Δᾶος, εὐτυ[χέστατον] / νομίσαιμι! ἔμαντό[ν.]

twist their ears, licence seemingly never allowed to American care-taker slaves.⁸¹ The παιδαγωγός was also supposed to supervise his wards' conduct, making sure to instil the children with manners concomitant with their societal position. Aristides gives us an idea of what this manners-oriented scolding might have sounded like: “Don’t παιδαγωγοί say these things? ‘It’s not right for you to overindulge in food!’ and ‘You’d better walk in the streets with decency, stand up for your elders, and love your parents!’ and ‘Neither make a fuss, nor play dice.’”⁸² In addition to these privileged responsibilities, these care-taker slaves, especially the very old ones, could reasonably expect a relatively restful ‘retirement’ after their wards came of age. In Euripides’ *Ion*, the παιδαγωγός is kept in the household despite being barely able to still walk.⁸³ In Demosthenes’ speech, *Against Evergus and Mnesibulus*, the nameless plaintiff relates that after his slave nurse had been freed, she was widowed and he “felt a compulsion not to see her being in need, she who was both his nurse and his παιδαγωγός,” so he let this woman live in his house again and eat with his wife at the same table.⁸⁴ Herodotus also tells us that, after “his slave and the παιδαγωγός of his children” had finished his exceptional duties, Themistocles “made him a Thespian as well as rich with money, when the Thespians were receiving new

⁸¹ For ear twisting, see Plutarch *Life of Marcus Cato* 20.4. This social practice contrasts strongly with the reality of ‘Uncle’ and ‘Mammy’ figures on American plantations, where non-fiction accounts claim that these slaves were often subjected to the violent whims of their young wards. Solomon Northup reported: “It is pitiable, sometimes, to see him [Epps’ son] chastising, for instance, Uncle Abram. He will call the old man to account, and if in his childish judgement it is necessary, sentence him to a certain number of lashes, which he proceeds to inflict with much gravity and deliberation.” (Northup [1853] 1970, 260-1) Even when a ‘Mammy’ had some authority, to exclude Whites from the kitchen, for example, non-fiction sources insist that she did not have the authority to physically reprimand the White children. Sc. Broidrick 1893, 6. Not even in fiction did a Black slave attain that ability. Sc. Pynnelle [1882] 1980, 65-6.

⁸² Aristides *In Defence of Oratory* 380: οὐχί... ταῦτα λέγουσιν... οἱ παιδαγωγοί; ὑπερεμπίπλασθαί σε οὐ χρὴ καὶ βαδίζειν ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς [ὅτι χρὴ] κοσμίως καὶ τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις ὑπανίστασθαι καὶ τοὺς γονέας φιλεῖν καὶ μὴ θορυβεῖν μηδὲ κυβεῦεν. For similar sentiments expressed by

⁸³ Euripides *Ion* 738-46; E. E. Cohen 2000, 146: “[There is a] remarkable absence from our sources of even a single instance of a slave being abandoned because of the infirmities of old age.”

⁸⁴ Demosthenes 47.55: ἀναγκαῖον οὖν ἦν μὴ περιδεῖν ἐνδεεῖς ὄντας μήτε τιθὴν γενομένην μήτε παιδαγωγόν.

citizens.”⁸⁵ While the *Shield’s* Daos is not quite as near retirement as these examples are—after all, he went off to war alongside Kleostratos—his remark that he had hoped for “some respite from [his] long labours as [he] entered old age, for [his] kind goodwill” certainly conjures up a similarly cared-for vision of his golden years. Hence the ‘foster-father’ devotion of Menander’s Daos can be thought of as ‘bought’ rather than natural and as contingent on the promise and receipt of privileges that not every slave could have expected. His loyalty does not become a point of natural difference between master and slave, but it still lends ideological support to slaveholders in that their presentation as givers of these privileges paints them as benevolent and worthy of their slaves’ loyalties.

Was the loyalty of the ‘every-slave’ in Comedy portrayed as particularly more natural than that of Daos? My inclination is to say no. Unlike a significant portion of antebellum American literature, the ancient Greek sources do not claim that loyalty to a master was a naturally inherent characteristic of their slaves.⁸⁶ Rather, as Socrates in Xenophon’s *Oikonomikos* explains, loyal slaves are “the most noteworthy product of estate

⁸⁵ Herodotus 8.75: οικήτης δὲ καὶ παιδαγωγὸς ἦν τῶν Θεμιστοκλέος παίδων: τὸν δὴ ὕστερον τούτων τῶν πρηγμάτων Θεμιστοκλέης Θεσπία τε ἐποίησε, ὡς ἐπεδέκοντο οἱ Θεσπίες πολίτας, καὶ χρήμασι ὄλβιον.

⁸⁶ An anonymous 3-year resident of Virginia, for example, wrote in his travelogue about the natural characteristics of the region’s slaves: “The slave has nearly all the African good qualities... he is kind and cheerful and he is never better pleased than when he can contribute to the pleasure of a white man.” (Schwaab and Bull 1973, 1.234) In fiction, this sort of loyalty is commonplace, typified in the ‘Sambo’ stereotype, whose “loyalty was all-consuming and self-immolating.” (Blassingame 1979, 225) William Caruther’s *The Kentuckian in New-York* offers a particularly good quotable (not cited by Blassingame): “Cato... was deeply imbued with that strong feudal attachment to the family, which is a distinguishing characteristic of the southern negroes.” (Caruthers 1834, 1.7) Female-authored proslavery novels tended to take the stereotype even further, insisting that ‘Mammy’ characters loved the White children more than their own Black children. (Jordan-Lake 2005) This stereotype happily coexisted alongside notions very similar to the Greeks’ view that masters ‘bought’ slaves’ loyalty. Planters were seen to ‘buy’ the loyalty of their slaves through adequate treatment, conference of garden plots and livestock, indulgence of the slaves’ intoxication, and the like; however, the believed perpetuity of Blacks’ enslavement drove into American culture a broad acceptance of the above by-nature, racial stereotype of slaves’ complacency in their subordination to the so-called ‘master race.’ This aspect of the modern slaving ideology is entirely missing from the ancient Greek sources.

management.”⁸⁷ So even the average slaves’ loyalties were ‘bought’ by fair treatment, by indulging small acts of insubordination, and by providing to slaves some outlet for their frustrations. In the *Frogs*, Dionysus bribes Xanthias into cooperation by conceding to him the donkey and by trying to hire the corpse to do Xanthias’ task for him. While this same Dionysus claims that Euripides taught the Athenians to keep a close eye on their thievish slaves,⁸⁸ the *Wealth*’s Carion never meets with any comeuppance for all the pilfering of food that he brags about. The presentation of so many instances of minor slave resistance in comedy seems to indicate that Greek masters understood, as many antebellum planters did, that indulging their slaves’ petty thievery was essential to maintaining morale.⁸⁹ Hence Carion’s pinching food from his master’s pantry could have been viewed at once as a humorous undermining of his owner’s authority and as a chuckling proof of the Athenians’ leniency toward their slaves, a self-presentation to which they were particularly attached. For example, Demosthenes wrote in his speech *Against Meidias* that the Athenians were “philanthropic” for their law forbidding the assault of slaves.⁹⁰ The idea that Athenian masters were lenient toward their slaves was of paramount importance to how the Athenians saw themselves: moderated in their life-style, self-

⁸⁷ Xenophon *Oeconomicus* 3.4: ἀξιοθέατον τῆς οἰκονομίας ἔργον. Obedience is explicitly made out to be a taught and learned characteristic later in the treatise (13.9ff).

⁸⁸ Aristophanes *Frogs* 982-88

⁸⁹ Charles Joyner explains: “When slaves on Brookgreen plantation broke into the rice barn and stole more rice, the wife of Joshua Ward told the overseers that the slaves should be given more rice rather than being punished for trying to steal it. As Ben Horry, one of Ward’s slaves, later recalled, “[If] anybody steal rice and they beat them, Miss Bessie cry and say, ‘Let ’em have rice! My rice—my nigger!’” (Joyner 1984, 97) A committee of Alabama planters, in an issue of *De Bow’s Review*, recommended a series of rules for the management of slaves, the ninth of which reads: “Do not, therefore, notice too many small omissions of duty.” (Calhoun et al. 1855, 718)

⁹⁰ Demosthenes 21.48-9: ἀκούετ’, ὦ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, τοῦ νόμου τῆς φιλανθρωπίας, ὃς οὐδὲ τοὺς δούλους ὑβρίζεσθαι ἀξιοῖ.

controlled in their passions, and just in their rule.⁹¹ For Comedy, the most significant aspect of their ‘just rule’ was the tolerance of slaves’ backtalk and speaking out of turn. As the Old Oligarch explains, one of the cornerstones of Athenian slave system, what kept the slaves concerned with their work rather than with their freedom, was that, “We established an equality of speech between slaves and freemen.”⁹² Hence we get characters like the Xanthias of *Frogs*, whose stereotypical backtalk—rendered so similar to the citizen rowers’ backtalk—is more or less good-naturedly humoured by his master Dionysus. The slave characters’ freedom to speak reflected both an actual aspect of the Athenian social system as well as how the Athenian slaveholders enjoyed imagining themselves. This indulgence was the ‘price’ by which the masters ‘earned’ their slaves’ loyalty, and such loyalty proved to them that their slave system was just. In this way, despite Comedy’s ‘production of similarity’ through its characterisation of slaves and freemen, the genre still helped shape an effective slaving ideology, one which allowed the Athenians to delude themselves into believing that their slavery was fair rather than in need of abolition. As Sallust famously wrote, picking up on this theme, “Few men want freedom, but a great share desire just masters.”⁹³

As much as Old Comedy’s slaveholder characters ‘earn’ slave loyalty through their indulgences, Aristophanes’ slaves are a far cry from being actually complacent. In the

⁹¹ Plato binds together all of these characteristics when he lectures on the proper treatment of slaves in the *Laws* 777d: “To treat them rightly is not only for their sake, but more for ours...For a man is distinguished in his nature as either faking reverence for justice or as truly hating injustice by [how he acts toward] those whom it is easy for him to wrong.” τρέφειν δ’ αὐτοὺς ὀρθῶς, μὴ μόνον ἐκείνων ἕνεκα, πλεον δὲ αὐτῶν...διάδηλος γὰρ ὁ φύσει καὶ μὴ πλαστῶς σέβων τὴν δίκην, μισῶν δὲ ὄντως τὸ ἄδικον, ἐν τούτοις τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐν οἷς αὐτῷ ῥᾶδιον ἀδικεῖν.

⁹² Old Oligarch 1.12: οὓν ἰσηγορίαν καὶ τοῖς δούλοις πρὸς τοὺς ἐλευθέρους ἐποιήσαμεν. This, of course, contrasts wildly with the typical American practice of outlawing slaves’ backtalk. John Basset summarised some of the “inferior offenses” codified in the North Carolina slave laws: “insolence to a free white person; slandering a free white person... indulging in grossly indecent familiarity with a white female.” (Basset 1899, 13)

⁹³ Sallust Histories 4, fr. 60.18: Namque pauci libertatem, pars magna iustos dominos volunt.

Frogs, for example, Aristophanes presents Xanthias and one of the slaves in Hades' palace having a conversation about how their minor acts of resistance provide them with an outlet for their frustrations and a source of happiness. According to these slave characters, defying orders, cursing masters secretly, grumbling about their treatment, and meddling in their master's private affairs are the simple pleasures that get them through their days, and they will likely never give them up.⁹⁴ Aristophanes makes no effort to portray slaves as naturally content in their station. Rather he humanises their need to butt against authority—a need with which citizens in the audience were invited to identify—and the master characters' indulgence of this need 'earns' them a grumpy loyalty.

Menander is a little different. Some of his slave portrayals, without doubt, approach complacency. For example, when the Daos of Menander's *Farmer* enters that play, hauling greenery for a wedding, he looks about the property and says, "I think that nobody farms a more holy field. For it bears myrtle, beautiful ivy, and such wondrous flowers!"⁹⁵ On a fine day, with a wedding party brewing just around the corner, the site of Daos' enslavement looks endearing to him. This passage finds an echo in the pastoral content of popular American black-face minstrel songs, particularly the show-starting 'plantation songs' that idealise plantation life and present Black folk as happiest, or even only happy, there.⁹⁶ "Oh! The water is bright and flashing like gold, in the rays of the

⁹⁴ Aristophanes *Frogs* 738-53. I follow Henderson's attribution of the lines of Xanthias' conversation partner to a nameless slave rather than Hall and Geldart's attribution of them to Aeacus. The "pleasure" aspect of this conversation is sexually explicit: μὰ Δί' ἀλλ' ὅταν δρῶ τοῦτο, κάκμαινομαι.

⁹⁵ Menander *Farmer* 35-7: ἀγρὸν εὐσεβέστερον ψεωργεῖν οὐδένα / οἶμαι· φέρει γὰρ μυρρ[ίνην, κιστὸν] καλόν, / ἄνθη τσσαῦτα.

⁹⁶ These 'plantation songs' and scenes of plantation festivals were major draws for the minstrel show crowds, and show advertisements rarely failed to brag about them. (Frick 2012, 145, 150) For an analysis of their content, see: Lott 1993, 171-3; 187-201.

morning sun,” sang Christy’s Minstrels, for instance, “and old Dinah’s up away out of the cold, and getting the hoe-cake done.”⁹⁷

This theme does not dominate Menander’s plays, however, and the poet displays that the pressures of slavery could drive slaves to radical acts of resistance. Similar acts in American proslavery literature are invariably exaggerated to the point that readers would not empathise with the rebellious slaves.⁹⁸ Menander had a softer heart. In the playwright’s *Dyskolos*, the slave Getas worries that, with Knemon now part of the family, he will have to “bear the work” of dealing with the man’s misanthropy, “if he’s always going to be this way.”⁹⁹ So, the slave enlists the help of a cook to dump his new master-in-law into the street and then badger him until he agrees to cheer up, include himself in the community, and join the wedding festivities. The play accepts that if a slave is in an unmanageable situation, he should (and can) do something radical to change it: resist.

Furthermore, Menander is the only author who gives any glimpse of a runaway scene, though it is woefully fragmentary and the slave is not trying to escape to freedom. Rather, he has made his way to an altar where, according to ancient Greek custom, he could plead mistreatment at the hands of his master and be resold if he presents a convincing enough case.¹⁰⁰ In a fragment of Menander’s *Perinthian Girl*, the play’s Daos is located at a temple’s altar while his master Laches orchestrates a smoke-out. Daos begs a “fellow

⁹⁷ Buckley 186?, vol. 2, 66-7, song no. 29: “Down the River, Down the Ohio.” For songs in this same volume about Blacks’ yearning for the plantation (or a cabin on it), see “Old Folks at Home” (vol. 1, 60ff, no. 27) or “I Long for my Home in Kentuck” (vol. 1, 100ff, no. 42). Cf. Stephen Foster’s “Old Kentucky Home” (Foster 1909, 139-40).

⁹⁸ No antebellum fiction portrays anything like Frederick Douglass’ fight with his master Covey, done without murderous intent on Douglass’ part, and how it won Douglass “six months” in which “Covey... never laid on me the weight of his finger in anger.” (Douglass 1984, 146-51) The typical fictional account impugns the slaves with murderous intent for frivolous reasons, on account of which they are sold down South. Sc. Caruthers 1834, 2.66-72.

⁹⁹ Menander *Dyskolos* 904-5: εἰ δ’ ἔσται τοιοῦτος ἀεὶ, / ἔργον ὑπενεγκεῖν.

¹⁰⁰ Rihl 2011, 52

slave” to save him, but to no avail. “Is that how we treat one another?”¹⁰¹ Laches, having finally gotten the upper hand on his stereotypically clever slave, cackles, “Now, Daos, show off your villainy: discover some scheme and escape from here and me!” “Me?” asks Daos, putting on his most innocent voice, “a scheme?” “Of course,” replies his master, “for it’s a joke to cheat your simple and vain master.”¹⁰² Clearly at some point in the earlier action Laches overheard or was told about how his slave boasted, “Whichever servant takes on and cheats a simple and vain master, I don’t know that this person has wrought any great deed, having bested a long-time moron.”¹⁰³ Unfortunately this scene has been robbed of its original context, and it is impossible to know why Daos has sought asylum or whether his master succeeds in smoking him out of the temple. For the purposes of this section of the paper it is enough to note that not every Daos in Menander is as complacent as the one in the *Farmer*, and their loyalty is neither total nor inborn. Some slaves get by in their line of work by occasionally resisting their masters, and in extreme cases they will even take to escape.

III. Fitness for Citizenship: Intelligence, Courage, and Humanity

“O men, wisest by nature,” sings the *Frog*’s chorus leader, “let’s be willing to make every man our kinsman and an enfranchised citizen, whoever fights alongside us at sea.”¹⁰⁴ This was no idle fancy of a progressive playwright. Before the Battle of Arginusae, Athens “made citizens out of those metics and many other foreigners willing

¹⁰¹ Menander *Perinthian Girl* 7: [οὔτ]ω πρὸς ἀλλήλους ἔχομεν;

¹⁰² Menander *Perinthian Girl* 12-5: **Λαχ.** [νυνί γ' ἐπ]ίδειξαι, Δᾶε, τὴν πανουργίαν, / τέχνην τιν' εὐρὸν διαφυγὼν τ' ἐνθένδε με. / **Δαο.** τέχνην ἐγώ; **Λαχ.** ναί, Δᾶε, τὸν μὲν ἀπράγμονα / καὶ κοῦφον ἐξαπατᾶν γάρ ἐστι δεσπότην / φλύαρος.

¹⁰³ Ibid. fr. 3 (1b Kō, 3 S): ὅστις παραλαβὼν δεσπότην ἀπράγμονα / καὶ κοῦφον ἐξαπατᾶ θεράπων, οὐκ οἶδ' ὅ τι / οὗτος μεγαλειὸν ἐστὶ διαπεπραγμένος / ἐπαβελτερώσας τὸν πάλαι <γ'> ἀβέλτερον.

¹⁰⁴ Aristophanes *Frogs* 700-3: ὃ σοφώτατοι φύσει. / πάντας ἀνθρώπους ἐκόντες συγγενεῖς κτησώμεθα / κάπιτίμους καὶ πολίτας, ὅστις ἂν ζυγνυμαχῆ.

to fight as their allies.” Then, after the battle had been won, the Athenians enfranchised the slaves who had shared in the rowing duties of the fleet.¹⁰⁵ Aristophanes, very likely a slaveholder, was not exactly enthused at this drastic dissolving of social distinctions, saying “it is shameful” (αἰσχρόν ἐστι), but given the dire circumstances of the late Peloponnesian War, he added: “Even I can’t claim that this was poorly done. Instead, I praise it; for this was the only thing you did while thinking rightly.”¹⁰⁶ Even an aristocrat had to admit that the city’s slaves had proven themselves courageous and worthy of citizen rights.

It should not surprise, therefore, that the Xanthias of *Frogs*, although he complains that he did not participate in the Battle of Arginusae, is portrayed as a fully capable, intelligent, and courageous chap, at least as far as is funny. The play was produced hot on the heels of the emancipatory event, when the need for a ‘production of similarity’ was particularly strong, since slaves were needed (and needed encouragement) to enrol in the navy. I have already discussed how, at Hades’ door, Aeacus could not tell the master from the slave. The scene hammers home that Xanthias and Dionysus are equals in intelligence, or more specifically equals in their (in)ability to manipulate others so as to escape from an unpleasant situation. In terms of braving dangers, however, Aristophanes allows Xanthias to carry the day.

His bravery should not be exaggerated. He is still quite similar to his rather cowardly master. When Charon asks him if he fought at Arginusae, he sheepishly offers up the

¹⁰⁵ Diodorus Siculus 13.97.1: ἐποίησαντο πολίτας τοὺς μετοίκους καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ξένων τοὺς βουλομένους συναγωνίσασθαι. Hunt 2001, 359-66. Sc. Hellanicus 323a F25.

¹⁰⁶ Aristophanes *Frogs* 695-6: κούδὲ ταῦτ’ ἔγωγ’ ἔχοιμ’ ἂν μὴ οὐ καλῶς φάσκειν ἔχειν, / ἄλλ’ ἐπαινῶ: μόνα γὰρ αὐτὰ νοῦν ἔχοντ’ ἐδράσατε.

excuse: “No... I happened to have pink-eye.”¹⁰⁷ Once the play’s protagonists cross the Styx, though, they run into the underworld’s monsters and Xanthias begins to look rather courageous in contrast to Dionysus, who cowers behind his slave and soils himself, conduct at odds with his earlier boast: “I am a warrior who lusts after glory!”¹⁰⁸ Dionysus again soils himself in fear when Aeacus first answers Hades’ door and rages at the pseudo-Heracles. Dionysus swaps Xanthias into the Heracles costume, and when Aeacus returns with guards “Heracleo-Xanthias” thrashes the first wave, requiring Aeacus to summon reinforcements.¹⁰⁹ The slave proves to be a capable warrior, a marker of fitness for citizenship in Greek city-state culture, and capable of performing his master’s role, a theme never found in antebellum proslavery literature.¹¹⁰ His bravery and combat ability is the extreme end of Aristophanes’ spectrum of slave capability. He hardly resembles the slaves found at its opposite end: the publically-owned, Scythian slaves utilised as Athens’ ‘police force’.

Because these Scythian archers’ conduct does not reflect on a private citizen, but rather upon the state representatives with whom the average Athenians were so often frustrated, they are boorish and dumb to a degree reached by no domestic slave character. Unlike Heracleo-Xanthias, they are pushovers. So, in Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata*, which was produced in 411, at just the time when Pisander was convincing the Athenians to abandon

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. 193: μὰ τὸν Δί’ οὐ γὰρ ἀλλ’ ἔτυχον ὀφθαλμιῶν.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. 281: με μάχιμον ὄντα φιλοτιμούμενος. The monster scene runs through lines 285-308.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 462ff

¹¹⁰ This contrasts sharply with White Americans’ insistence that Black folk were naturally cowardly and therefore unfit for military duty. On the Black cowardice stereotype, see: Du Bois 1935, 56, 93, 104; J. D. Foner 1974, 7.

democracy,¹¹¹ the women revolutionaries soundly beat the barbarian guards. The magistrate musters all his men and tells them to charge the women: “Scythians, twist their arms!” But Lysistrata holds the line, commands her forces skilfully, and routs the archers, gloating, “Didn’t you know that these women have got some bite?”¹¹² At a time when frustration with and fear of those men commandeering the Athenian state was at a high, Aristophanes let the audience laugh off some of their anxiety by watching a comedic, cathartic routing of the state’s slave strongmen.¹¹³

This is the same sort of historical situation in which the more fleshed out Scythian archer character in Aristophanes’ *Thesmophoriazusae* is found. This play was performed later in 411, after the oligarchs had begun their political manoeuvring. The ‘police man’ is again a safe target at which to aim the *demos*’ frustrations.¹¹⁴ The Scythian slave enters the play when a magistrate orders the archer to bind Mnesilochus and to place him outside “so that to passers-by his criminality will be clear to see.”¹¹⁵ The playwright Euripides enters dressed up as Echo, and essentially pesters both the Scythian and his captive until the slave runs him off.¹¹⁶ Euripides again enters, this time dressed up as Perseus. He sings tragic verses in an attempt to hoodwink the Scythian through drama into believing that Mnesilochus is Andromeda and that ‘Perseus’ is there to heroically ferry her away. The Scythian is not *that* stupid. He lifts Mnesilochus’ tunic and points to

¹¹¹ Thucydides 8.54. Note that “at first, the demos took the news poorly.” ὁ δὲ δῆμος τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἀκούων χαλεπῶς.

¹¹² Aristophanes *Lysistrata* 464-5: γυναῖξιν οὐκ οἶει / χολῆν ἐνεῖναι;

¹¹³ Hall 2006, 239-41

¹¹⁴ During the Scythian’s scenes, the chorus invokes Athena: “Appear, O goddess, hating our tyrants as is fitting!” φάνηθ’ ὧ̃ τυράννουσ’ / στυγοῦσ’ ὥσπερ εἰκόσ. (Lines 1143-4)

¹¹⁵ Aristophanes *Thesmophoriazusae* 943-4: ἵνα τοῖς παριοῦσι δῆλος ᾗ̃ς πανοῦργος ὢν.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. 1054-98.

the actor's phallus: "Check out his penis."¹¹⁷ After a few more highfaluting lines from Euripides, the slave scares him off by drawing his sword. As the playwright retreats, the Scythian says, "That villainous fox is trying pretty hard to fool me."¹¹⁸ Of course, after a choral song speeds by some time, Euripides re-enters and finds that the Scythian, like so many of Aristophanes' characters, has fallen asleep on watch duty. This time Euripides has found the Scythian's weakness: a pretty flute-girl. Disguised as a pimp, Euripides disarms the Scythian by trading the girl for the slave's bow and quiver, and when the Scythian leads the prostitute offstage to do his business, Euripides escapes with Mnesilochus. The play closes with a clever citizen outwitting the strongman and face of the current political regime, probably much to the delight of the audience members, most of whom were not invited to share in the new regime's political privileges.

Some scholars want to read this scene racially, as an Athenian besting a barbarian slave. Edith Hall calls the scene, in particularly tone deaf language, a "poetic lynching."¹¹⁹ She reads the Scythian as a racist caricature of the sort found in American black-face minstrelsy—indeed, her thoughts were led in this direction by William Arrowsmith's (unpublished) 1980s translation that cast the public slave in blackface, following in the tradition established by Dudley Fitts' 1959 translation of the *Thesmophoriazousae* which likewise called for the slave's costuming to be "minstrel-show blackface with bright red hair."¹²⁰ But none of the characteristics with which Hall

¹¹⁷ Ibid. 1114: σκέψαι τὸ κύστο.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. 1133: μιὰ ρὸς ἀλώπηξ, οἷον ἐπιτήκιζι μοι.

¹¹⁹ Hall 2006, 254

¹²⁰ Hall 2006, 253; Fitts 1959, 126-7. Furthermore, Hall misconstrues Mary-Kay Gamel's 2002 essay by citing it to support her contention that there is an "impossibility, for a modern producer or adapter of the play 'in an era sensitive to racist stereotypes', of retaining the archer in the way that Aristophanes wrote the role." (p. 253, n. 102) Gamel does not say this. Rather, she suggests that the more analogous American stereotype was the "dumb Irish cop," which is obviously the more preferable way to capture Aristophanes'

impugns the Scythian slave are in any way exclusive to his ‘caste’ of characters. She claims that “his most obvious attributes,” are: “cruelty, sloth, aggression, verbal abusiveness, libidinousness, and philistine failure to understand the protocols of either the tragic or paratragic stage.”¹²¹ This last characteristic will be dealt with first, since the rest are clearly universalised vices by which the slave has been ‘made similar’ to many citizen characters throughout Comedy.

I simply do not see how the Scythian-versus-Euripides scene can be read as the archer ‘failing to understand’ the theatrical trick which fails to dupe him. When the Scythian sees right through Euripides’ tragic costuming, the playwright exclaims in overblown verse: “Alas! What should I do? To what arguments should I turn? His barbarian nature won’t accept [my trickery.] You waste your time, producing new and clever things for dullards, so some other scheme, befitting of this man, must be added.”¹²² It is right after these lines that the Scythian shrugs, rolls his eyes, and says, “That villainous fox is trying pretty hard to fool me.” In context, the Scythian knows exactly what is going on. It is not that he is too stupid to ‘get’ Athenian tragedy, but that he is *not* so stupid as to think the man he just tied up has magically become Andromeda a few minutes later. This little speech given by Euripides before he scampers off the stage reads to me as though he is trying to save face by blaming the Scythian for his own plan’s failure. The audience is invited to laugh at the tragedian for thinking tragedy is the solution to every problem.

ethnocentrism. (Gamel 2002, 473) On Arrowsmith’s translation, see: Scharffenberger 2002. On the Scythian’s dialect as explicitly not lampooned to the extent found in black-face comedy, in that “there is no gibberish,” see: Colvin 1999, 290.

¹²¹ Hall 2006, 253

¹²² Aristophanes *Thesmophoriazusae* 1128-32: αἰαῖ: τί δράσω; πρὸς τίνος στρεφθῶ λόγους; / ἀλλ’ οὐ γὰρ ἂν δέξαιτο βάρβαρος φύσις. / σκαιοῖσι γὰρ τοὶ καινὰ προσφέρων σοφὰ / μάτην ἀναλίσκοις ἄν, ἀλλ’ ἄλλην τινὰ / τοῦτω πρέπουσαν μηχανὴν προσοιστέον.

My reading is bolstered by comparative American material, which Edith Hall should have considered given her insistence on the word “lynching.” In the black-face minstrel show the “philistine failure to understand the protocols” of White culture and entertainment is a staple of Black caricatures. Perhaps the best example can be found in a popular skit called *The Lion Tamer*.¹²³ In this sketch, as it was acted in the 1951 film *Yes Sir, Mr. Bones*, the White interlocutor Chick offers the black-face character Cotton an acting job as a lion tamer in a film, but Chick cannot get Cotton to understand that the lion is not only tame, but “doesn’t have a tooth in his head.” Chick says, “I want to get a moving picture of you in the lion cage,” and Cotton puns, “If you e-e-ever gets a picture of me in the lion cage, I’ll be movin’ alright!” “You don’t understand, Cotton,” replies Chick. “The lion was raised on milk.” “I was too, but I eat pork chops now!” Cotton ends up turning down the job, unable to comprehend the premise of a tamed lion. This is a true “philistine failure to understand.” The Scythian archer, able to pierce Euripides’ trickery, looks like a veritable genius in comparison with the degrading caricatures that danced upon the American minstrel stage.

As for the Scythian’s “cruelty, sloth, aggression, verbal abusiveness, [and] libidinousness,” these are all universalised vices in Comedy. The universality of ‘sloth’ in Aristophanes has already been adequately addressed. I have also demonstrated that in the *Frogs*, citizen rowers were just as ‘verbally abusive’ as the slave Xanthias. Furthermore, many of Aristophanes’ characters ‘verbally abuse’ choice aristocrats and the audience using language as, if not more, filthy than what the Scythian marshals. ‘Cruelty’ and

¹²³ Uncomfortably modern versions of this skit are readily available on the internet. The 1920s black-face singer Emmett Miller’s *Minstrel Man from Georgia* (1996) compilation album contains a recording of the songs. Cotton Watts and Chick Watts performed a truncated version of the skit in the black-face minstrel movie *Yes Sir, Mr. Bones* (1951). The clip is available here: <https://goo.gl/YPfOjq>.

‘aggression’ are hardly more characteristic of this Scythian than of, say, Philocleon in the *Wasps*, who remarks to his Xanthias, “Don’t you remember when I caught you stealing grapes, and I led you to an olive tree to flay you with such a manly spirit that you were right pleased?”¹²⁴ Eugene O’Neill Jr.’s 1938 translation renders the last bit as “that folks thought you had been raped,” taking Xanthias’ “pleasure” as sexual.¹²⁵ Finally, the Scythian slave’s ‘libidinousness’ is far less aggressive and exaggerated than that of Dicaeopolis in the *Acharnians*, who gleefully sings about raping a slave girl; than that of Trygaeus’ in *Peace*, who details a gang-bang fantasy for the audience; or than that of the *Frog*’s Dionysus, who only stops cowering behind his slave when there is the prospect of raping Empousa in her youthful, womanly form. None of the Scythian’s caricaturing rises to the level of racism, in that his vices do not distinguish him from the free Athenian characters. While he is the butt of Euripides’ scheming, his characterisation still plays into Comedy’s general ‘production of similarity’ by not singling out his deficiencies.

The last of Aristophanes’ slaves whose behaviour needs to be examined in connection with the ‘fitness for citizenship’ theme is the *Peace*’s nameless slave. After he and his master have handed over Theoria to the *Boule*, the slave shows quite a bit of initiative and even gets bossy. As Daniel Walin notes, he takes firm control of the dialogue, while his master Trygaeus sets up his punch lines.¹²⁶ “What needs to be done by us next?” “We need to dedicate some pots of pulse to the goddess (Peace).” The slave rejects this suggestion outright. “Pulse pots? Like for the whining little Hermes?” “Well what seems

¹²⁴ Aristophanes *Wasps* 449-51: οὐδ’ ἀναμνησθεῖς ὅθ’ εὐρών τοὺς βότρυς κλέπτοντά σε / προσαγαγὼν πρὸς τὴν ἐλάαν ἐξέδειρ’ εἰς κἀνδρικῶς, / ὥστε σε ζηλωτὸν εἶναι;

¹²⁵ Sommerstein claims that the slave should be pleased because of how “well” (εἰς κἀνδρικῶς) Philocleon administered the beating. O’Neill’s translation reads more appropriately as a joke in my opinion.

¹²⁶ Walin 2009, 39. His argument rests on a slightly controversial attribution of lines to the slave character, but most recent editors (Platnauer, Sommerstein, and Henderson) treat the text this way.

appropriate to you?”¹²⁷ The slave rejects his master’s next suggestions, a bull and a pig, and then offers his own anti-war idea: a ‘la-a-amb’ (οί.).¹²⁸ “Why are you pronouncing this word in the Ionic dialect?” asks his master, making way for the slave’s punch line. “So that whenever someone in the assembly says we need to go to war, the men sitting there will say, out of fear, ‘la-a-ah!-mb’, and be gentler in every way.”¹²⁹ Not only is this slave an adept anti-war schemer, he also has better religious manners than his master, and stops Trygaeus from making a sacrificial blunder. When Trygaeus has the lamb at Peace’s altar, he orders his slave: “Take a knife, and then, like a professional chef, slaughter the lamb.” “But that’s not right!” exclaims the slave. “Peace probably won’t be too pleased with slaughtering, or with her altar covered in blood.”¹³⁰ Trygaeus agrees and tells him to do the deed offstage, where they can spare the lamb and their producer the cost for said lamb. I do not want to exaggerate the nameless slave’s intellect in these scenes. He is no genius.¹³¹ Rather, I want to stress that both the playwright and the character Trygaeus treat the slave, in the words of Daniel Walin, as though he were an “equal and partner,” perhaps a reflection of what Xenophon thought was typical Greek

¹²⁷ Aristophanes *Peace* 922-5: **Οίκ.** ἄγε δὴ τί νῶν ἐντευθενὶ ποιητέον; / **Τρυ.** τί δ’ ἄλλο γ’ ἢ ταύτην χύτραις ἰδρυτέον; **Οίκ.** χύτραισιν, ὥσπερ μεμφόμενον Ἑρμῆδιον; / **Τρυ.** τί δαι δοκεῖ;

¹²⁸ Ibid. 929; ‘la-a-amb’ trans. Sommerstein 1978

¹²⁹ Ibid. 931-4: ἴν’ ὅταν ἐν τῆκκλησίᾳ / ὡς χρὴ πολεμεῖν λέγη τις, οἱ καθήμενοι / ὑπὸ τοῦ δέουσι λέγωσ’ Ἴωνικῶς οἶ—καὶ τᾶλλα γ’ ὅσιν ἦπιοι.

¹³⁰ Ibid. 1017-20: **Τρυ.** λαβὲ τὴν μάχαιραν: εἶθ’ ὅπως μαγειρικῶς / σφάξεις τὸν οἶν. **Οίκ.** ἀλλ’ οὐ θέμις... οὐχ ἦδεταὶ δῆπουθεν Εἰρήνη σφαγαῖς, / οὐδ’ αἵματοῦται βωμός. These line attributions again follow Sommerstein and Henderson rather than Hall and Geldart.

¹³¹ Perhaps an even cleverer slave is the one belonging to Euripides in the *Acharnians*, who answers the door with the Euripidean paradox: “[Euripides] is both inside and not inside, if you have the brainpower [to decipher the riddle.]... His mind is outside collecting verses, but he himself is writing tragedy, feet up.” Dicaeopolis remarks, “This slave here responds so cleverly!” (lines 396-401) **Κηφ.** οὐκ ἔνδον ἔνδον ἐστίν, εἰ γνώμην ἔχεις... ὁ νοῦς μὲν ἔξω ξυλλέγων ἐπύλλια / οὐκ ἔνδον, αὐτὸς δ’ ἔνδον ἀναβάδην ποιεῖ / τραγῳδίαν. / **Δικ.** ὅθ’ ὁ δοῦλος οὕτωσὶ σαφῶς ἀπεκρίνατο.

practice: the purchase of slaves as “fellow workers” (συνεργούς).¹³² His opinions are taken seriously and acted upon in preference to his masters’ erroneous opinion. This does not require elaborately deferential manners on the slave’s part, no holding of his hat or the like.¹³³ The plot and the master character treat him as ‘fit’ for intelligence.

Menander ran with the ‘clever slave’ trope inherited from Old Comedy and took it to new heights. Nowhere is this more prevalent than in his play *The Shield*, where the loyal slave Daos masterminds all of the plot twists that ultimately save the day. The most important of those plot twists is the cunning plan that he conjures up to keep the old uncle Smirkines from marrying his much younger niece, who had been reserved for a more eligible young man. After the masters of the household fail to dissuade Smirkines from the marriage, they collapse into ineffectual heaps. Daos then enters the scene and immediately, in good παιδαγωγός form, chastises one of them: “Chairestratos, you’re not acting rightly. Get up! It’s not right to just lie around, despondent!”¹³⁴ “Oh Daos my boy,” sobs the useless Chairestratos, “I’m doing badly. ...I won’t live through it, by the gods, if I see this marriage happen.” Ready to save the household, Daos asks, “So how’s somebody get around such an exceedingly toilsome man?” Chairestratos mopes, “It’s very difficult.” “Hard,” reassures Daos, “but nevertheless possible.”¹³⁵ The slave then explains his plan. The masters do not follow. Chairestratos turns to his son and asks, “Do you understand what he’s talking about?” “Not at all, by Dionysus!” “Me neither” admits

¹³² Walin 2009, 45; Xenophon *Memorabilia* 2.3.3; Finley 1980, 81

¹³³ When the slave Sam in William Caruther’s *The Kentuckian in New-York* makes a joke at his master’s expense (punctuated, of course, by calling him ‘masta’), Mr. Randolph remarks on this exceptional conduct to the reader: Sam “consider[ed] himself privileged by the exigencies of the case.” (p. 1.143)

¹³⁴ Menander *Shield* 299-300: Χαίρεστρατ', οὐκ ὀρθῶς ποιεῖς· ἀνίστασο· / οὐκ ἔστ' ἄθυμειν οὐδὲ κείσθαι.

¹³⁵ Ibid. 305-17: **Χαι.** Δᾶε παῖ, κακῶς ἔχω. . . οὐ μὴ βιῶ, μὰ τοὺς θεοὺς, / εἰ τοῦτ' ἐπόνομαι γενόμενον. **Δαο.** πῶς ἂν οὖν / τοῦ σφόδρα πονηροῦ περιγένοιτό τις; **Χαι.** Πάνυ / ἐργῶδες. **Δαο.** ἐργῶδες μὲν, ἀλλ' ἔνεσθ' ὅμως.

Chairestratos with a shake of his head.¹³⁶ Daos has to give them another, truncated explanation of his scheme before they are able to grasp its subtleties. Here, again, we find a slave portrayed as ‘fit’ for intelligent reasoning, as well as masters willing to acquiesce to his expertise. Daos rises to the occasion and takes control of *his* household in order to save it. After all, as he remarks to his master’s son about the pitifully dejected father: “The interests belonging to all of *us*, I dare say, rest in this man’s hands.”¹³⁷ Given how well Daos commands the household, Menander presents a slave who appears just as ‘fit for citizenship’ and authority as the helplessly stupid citizens, Chairestratos and Chaireas to whom he is loyal.¹³⁸

This sort of ‘fitness for citizenship’ underscores the characterisation of the slave Syros in Menander’s *Arbitration*. He is a charcoal-burner who lives with a wife away from the city and pays to his master a rent for the privilege. Syros has taken over the care of a baby from the slave Daos, who had found it exposed. It had been left with some trinkets, and Daos will not give them up along with the baby. Syros, worried that the baby will lose its chance to be reunited with its parents should it lose its identifying trinkets, persists in demanding them from Daos. Instead of resorting to theft or violence, he declares, “Somebody needs to arbitrate for us.” “I agree,” says Daos. “Let’s find someone.”¹³⁹ Syros explains their logic: “At every opportunity, everywhere, it is right that justice wins out, and that those who have a share in it pay it their attention. In life, this is common to

¹³⁶ Ibid. 346-7: **Χαι.** μανθάνεις / ὃ λέγει; **Χαιρεας.** μὰ τὸν Διόνυσον, οὐ δῆτ'. **Χαι.** οὐδ' ἐγώ.

¹³⁷ Ibid. 301-2: τὰ πράγματα ἡμῖν ἅπασιν ἐστὶν ἐν τούτῳ σχεδόν.

¹³⁸ This contrasts with antebellum plantation novels that insist Blacks are incapable of authoritative roles like that of a driver, even though they routinely did such jobs in real life. Sc. Caruthers 1834, 2.70: “This ignorant creature was elevated by the overseer to an authority... which I doubt whether any ignorant negro can exercise without injury to himself and his fellows. It clothes the slave with the authority and some of the privileges of the master; two conditions which are entirely incompatible with each other.”

¹³⁹ Menander *Arbitration* 219-20: **Συρ.** ἐπιτρεπτόν τινί / ἐστὶ περὶ τούτων. **Δαο.** βούλομαι· κρινώμεθα.

everyone.”¹⁴⁰ It is significant for my case for Comedy’s ‘production of similarity’ that these slaves are seen to respect legal convention as well as to perform adequately within it by making logically argued speeches. For example, Daos argues that he would have shared the trinkets with Syros, if Syros had been there when they were found, as follows traditional Greek convention, for which Daos invokes the phrase: “shared Hermes” (κοινὸς Ἑρμῆς). Syros counters that the convention does not apply, because Daos did not find unclaimed trinkets, but robbed the baby of them. The arbitrator finds in Syros’ favour, and while Daos is grumpy that he loses, he accepts the verdict as binding and just. The slaves at once understand the rules of the legal system as well as play by them.¹⁴¹

They are not ridiculed as unfit for such participation, a depiction that contrasts sharply with the plantation novels’ depictions of masters arbitrating for their slaves. A particularly apt example is the arbitration scene with which William Gilmore Simms ended *The Golden Christmas* (1852). Jehu, the novel’s impossibly stupid slave, steals the fattened pig of his fellow-slave Zacharias, who is a good deal more educated owing to his status as a butler to the head of the household. Unlike how Menander presents both of the plausibly argued speeches given by Daos and Syros, Simms only lets Zacharias speak directly when thanking his master. Every other line is lost to exposition—though, the narrator assures us “Zach stated his case in the most gentlemanly style”—so as to leave the reader’s attention squarely on the broken dialect of Jehu, in which Simms indulges far

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. 232-6: ἐν παντὶ δεῖ / καιρῷ τὸ δίκαιον ἐπικρατεῖν ἀπανταχοῦ, / καὶ τὸν παρατυγχάνοντα τούτου τοῦ μέρους / ἔχειν πρόνοιαν· κοινόν ἐστι τῷ βίῳ / πάντων.

¹⁴¹ This contrasts with planter’s notions of slaves inaptitude for ‘modern’ legality. For example, in 1832, the travel-writer John Legare, after visiting the state of Georgia, reported verbatim some notes that the owner of the ‘Hopeton’ plantation had written for him about the condition and management of slaves, and as concerns ‘Discipline’, the planter wrote: “Our refinement in the police and over legislation are ill adapted to the structure of negro society. Simplicity should pervade every department.” (As quoted in Schwaab and Bull 1973, 1.259)

too freely. As might be expected, Jehu's 'defense' speech, really more of a confession, is absurd in its logic. The crux of his argument is simply that he should escape punishment because "it [is] a law of his nature that he should steal it," and so everyone should have kept a closer eye on their pigs.¹⁴² Simms' Jehu is totally incapable of presenting an acceptable defense. Unlike Menander's Syros and Daos, Jehu makes no appeal to general moral principles, laws, or precedents, only to his own racial nature. He is clearly unfit for citizenship in 'civilised' society, and by contrast makes Syros and Daos look positively fit for it.

IV. 'Criminality': Thievery and Sexual Threat

Compared to the stereotypical livestock stealers in American literature, and compared to Comedy's politicians, Aristophanes' slaves are small-time thieves. Even Carion of *Wealth*, who is blessed by Hermes, and whose master considers him at once his "most trustworthy and thievish" slave, pilfers just a few small meals.¹⁴³ When Carion first leaves the stage, he boasts to the audience, "Going inside sneakily, I plan on taking some bread and meat from my master and munching them until it's working time again."¹⁴⁴ Later in the play Carion relates how he nabbed some porridge while sleeping in Asclepius' temple, and his delight with himself makes the thieving scene take on the "sporting element" that American historian Eugene Genovese discovered in many ex-

¹⁴² Simms 1852, 166-7: "I won't tell you bit o' lie, maussa. You know, maussa, I always bin tell you, I can't help it—I must tief pig. ... I can't help it—I must tief pig. ... Der's a someting mek me do it, maussa. Der's somebody dat's a saying in my ear all de time—"kill de pig, Jehu."

¹⁴³ Master's opinion of Carion: Aristophanes *Wealth* 26-7: τῶν ἐμῶν γὰρ οἰκετῶν / πιστότατον ἠγοῦμαι σε καὶ κλεπτίστατον. Hermes' blessing: Ibid. 1139-40. Cf. *Peace* 12-14; *Wasps* 449; *Frogs* 982-88; *Knights* 85ff.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. *Wealth* 318-21: ἐγὼ δ' ἰὼν ἤδη λάθρα / βουλήσομαι τοῦ δεσπότητος / λαβῶν τιν' ἄρτον καὶ κρέας / μασώμενος τὸ λοιπὸν οὔτω τῷ κόπῳ ξυνεῖναι.

slave interviews.¹⁴⁵ The woman to whom the porridge belonged heard him creeping up, “So,” Carion explains, “hissing, I seized her with my teeth, like Asclepius’ snake might, and straightaway she pulled back her hand... Then I gobbled down a bunch of the gruel, and only when I was full did I slink away.”¹⁴⁶ Unlike most American ex-slave narratives, however, Carion explains that his thievery was simply following the example of free folk: “I saw the priest stealing cakes and figs from the temple’s table. ... Taking careful note of so holy an act, I went after that bowl of porridge.”¹⁴⁷ Aristophanes draws a direct link between stereotypical slave and citizen thievishness.

In fact, the poet delights in taunting the Athenian citizenry, and especially the politicians, for their larceny. In the *Wasps*, Bdelycleon asks his father to relate his “manliest deed,” and Philocleon says, “That’s got to be when I stole Ergasion’s vine-stakes.”¹⁴⁸ Eupolis, one of Aristophanes’ rivals, is quoted as accusing the philosopher Socrates of wine-theft. He wrote: “Socrates, while singing a piece by Stesichorus on the lyre, received the decanter from the left and stole it!”¹⁴⁹ Aristophanes is more obsessed with the larger scale pilfering of public funds. In *Wealth*, Carion claims that the blind

¹⁴⁵ Genovese 1974, 605-6: “For many slaves, stealing from their own or other masters became a science and an art, employed as much for the satisfaction of outwitting Ole Massa as anything else.”

¹⁴⁶ Aristophanes *Wealth* 689-95: κάτα συρίζας ἐγὼ / ὁδᾶξ ἐλαβόμεν ὡς παρείας ὦν ὄφεις. / ἢ δ’ εὐθέως τὴν χεῖρα πάλιν ἀνέσπασεν. ... κάγω τότε ἤδη τῆς ἀθάρης πολλὴν ἐφλων. / ἔπειτ’ ἐπειδὴ μεστός ἦν, ἀνεπαλλόμεν.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. 676-83: ὀρῶ τὸν ἱερέα / τοὺς φθοῖς ἀφαρπάζοντα καὶ τὰς ἰσχάδας / ἀπὸ τῆς τραπέζης τῆς ἱερᾶς. ... κάγω νομίσας πολλὴν ὀσίαν τοῦ πράγματος / ἐπὶ τὴν χύτραν τῆς ἀθάρης ἀνίσταμαι. Cf. the thievish priest in *Peace* 1117-8. When American slaves impugned their masters for thievishness, they located that thievishness in Whites stealing Black folk, which is a line of reasoning important to distinguish from Carion’s. Cf. *WPA Slave Narratives*, vol. 16, part 2, 163.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. *Wasps* 1200-1: ἀνδρειοτάτον γε τῶν ἐμῶν, / ὅτ’ Ἐργασίωνος τὰς χάρακας ὑφειλόμην.

¹⁴⁹ Eupolis fr. 395: δεξάμενος δὲ Σωκράτης τὴν ἐπιδείξει <ἄδων> / Στησιχόρου πρὸς τὴν λύραν, οἰνοχόνην ἐκλεμνεν. Cf. *Clouds* 497, Socrates fleeces Strepsiades of his cloak.

politician Neocleides “outdoes seeing men at robbery.”¹⁵⁰ Strepsiades of *Clouds* calls the politician Simon a “robber of public funds.”¹⁵¹ In the *Knights*, Demos explains that he “wishes to nourish a thief as his champion, and, having raised him up, crush him, whenever he’s full.”¹⁵² This is, of course, one of the many jabs taken specifically at Cleon, champion of the people, Aristophanes’ arch-nemesis, and famed bribe-taker.¹⁵³ The joke is broadened in the *Wasps*, where Philocleon stereotypes all magistrates as embezzlers and crooks. Putting up with their pettifoggery, he explains, is one of his favourite aspects of sitting on the Athenian juries, especially when they supplicate him to forgive their transgressions with a “soft hand, which has robbed the public funds.”¹⁵⁴ These crooked politicians assume that every citizen that can get his hands on a magistracy is going to use it to turn an illegal profit.¹⁵⁵ They are all thieves. In the *Assemblywomen*, Chremes reports that an orator told this to the assembly’s face. “First he said you were knavish... then a thief... and an informer!” “Just me?” asks Blepyrus. “Gods no,” replies Chremes, pointing out into the audience, “this crowd here!”¹⁵⁶ Comedy implicates everyone in theft, because the genre was committed to ridiculing

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. *Wealth* 665-6: εἷς μὲν γε Νεοκλείδης, ὅς ἐστι μὲν τυφλός, / κλέπτων δὲ τοὺς βλέποντας ὑπερηκόντικεν.

¹⁵¹ Ibid. *Clouds* 351: ἄρπαγα τῶν δημοσίων... Σίμωνα.

¹⁵² Ibid. *Knights* 1127-30: κλέπτοντά τε βούλομαι / τρέφειν ἕνα προστάτην: / τοῦτον δ', ὅταν ᾗ πλέως, / 1130 ἄρα εἰπάταξα.

¹⁵³ Cleon is regularly attacked for theft and taking bribes, and a favourite topic of Aristophanes’ is Cleon’s conviction by the *Knights* for taking a 5 talent bribe from the island cities of the Delian League. Sc. *Acharnians* 5-8, 299-301; *Wasps* 758-9; *Knights* 802-3. Cf. *Peace* 651ff.

¹⁵⁴ Aristophanes *Wasps* 555: τὴν χεῖρ' ἀπαλὴν τῶν δημοσίων κεκλοφυῖαν.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Ibid. *Thesmophoriazousae* 936-7: “O prytny, by your right hand, which you love to stretch out empty if someone is giving silver.” ὃ πρύτανι πρὸς τῆς δεξιᾶς, ἦνπερ φιλεῖς / κοίλην προτείνειν ἀργύριον ἦν τις διδῶ,

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. *Assemblywomen* 436-440: **Chr.** πρῶτον μὲν σ' ἔφη / εἶναι πανοῦργον... κάπειτα κλέπτην... καὶ συκοφάντην. **Ble.** ἐμὲ μόνον; **Chr.** καὶ νῆ Δία / τῶνδ' ἰσχυρῶν.

universal human faults.¹⁵⁷ One of these is that whenever someone can get away with something, he typically takes the opportunity to do so. By painting humanity this way, and by not parroting elite pretensions to greater morality, ancient comedians worked to ‘produce similarity’ among the various classes living at Athens.

More surprising, given modern colonial slavery’s deep-rooted anxieties concerning the sexual exclusivity of upper-class White women and its hyper-sexualisation of male slaves, is that Greek comedy exhibits no traces of “moral panic” about the sexuality of slaves. Comedy does not demonise it, portray it as particularly uncontrollable, or present it as a threat to the social order. Enslaved men are not ‘Bucks’, and enslaved women are not ‘Jezebels’. Rape is invariably perpetrated by native citizens and freemen, in contrast to the endless White American obsession with a mythical Black male rapist.¹⁵⁸ The most sexually active slaves of Old Comedy are Xanthias in *Wasps*, the Scythian Archer in *Thesmophoriazusae*, and the nameless slave in *Peace*. Unlike American antebellum stage plays, where slave characters’ sexual arousal was acceptable only as circumscribed Freudian allusion,¹⁵⁹ in Aristophanic comedy it was “evidently unproblematic to present a male slave mentioning his sex life,” as S.C. Todd explains. Furthermore, all of Old Comedy’s slaves direct their sexual attentions toward prostitutes or prostitute-like

¹⁵⁷ Along those lines, it is notable that when Theophrastus wrote a series of character sketches about people’s archetypal personalities, all of the types are ‘bad’ people.

¹⁵⁸ Rosanna Omitowaju suggests that the slave Daos in Menander’s *Hero* is “not incompatible with the experience of *eros*, an activity which could be claimed to include rape.” (Omitowaju 2002, 192) Of course, he explicitly says that he has made no move concerning the woman he loves (line 42: οὐδ’ ἐγκεχείρηκ’), so clearly *his* experience of *eros* does not “include rape” in anything except potentiality. Omitowaju’s insights into the presentation of rape in New Comedy are invaluable: “In Menander, Plautus and Terence, and probably other New Comedy, the rape is always resolved by the marriage of the rapist and the victim, or... [by] the recognition and subsequent marriage of the victim’s daughter, or if rapist and victim are already married, [by] the re-establishment of their marriage.” Instead of adversely affecting women’s social status, New Comedy’s rapes tend to solidify the women’s marriageability insofar as their resistance to the attack ultimately proves their chastity. (Ibid. 184)

¹⁵⁹ Lott 1993, 159-68

goddesses (Opora and Theoria of *Peace*), and so “there is no hint of a threat to the free citizen women.” In New Comedy slave sexuality “is rarely noticed” and therefore similarly unproblematic.¹⁶⁰

As concerns ancient anxiety over slaves’ access to citizen women, the best comedic case study is provided by Herodas in his fifth *mimiamb*. The sketch opens with Bitinna, a citizen woman, irate that her slave lover has allegedly cheated on her. “Gastron, tell me: is [your penis] so overly full that you’re no longer content to arouse my legs, but also sleep with Menon’s Amphytaea?”¹⁶¹ The slave gives a rather impatient reply: “Bitinna, I am your slave. I’m ready for whatever you wish of me, but don’t drink my blood night and day.”¹⁶² The mistress, looking for more remorse from her slave, orders her other slaves to tie Gastron up and take him to the workhouse (ζήτρειον) to receive a thousand lashes on the back and a thousand on his front.¹⁶³ His plea—“I’m a man! I made a mistake!”—elicits no pity from Bitinna, and she demands that he also be branded on his face for his indiscretion.¹⁶⁴ A fellow-slave, Kydilla, swoops in and begs her mistress to spare Gastron his punishment, swearing by the mistress’ daughter. “Forgive him now,” she pleads, “as your Batyllis may live, you may see her going into a husband’s home, and

¹⁶⁰ Todd 2013, 38-42. David Walin reads far more into the actions and jokes of the nameless slave of *Peace*, rightly in my opinion, but detailed analysis of *Peace* would be counterproductive to the aims of this chapter due to the purely fantasy-based nature of the play’s sexual content. Walin suggests that Aristophanes implies that the nameless slave “cuckholds” his master, in that Opora is presented as Trygaeus’ bride-to-be. When the slave leads Opora offstage and “Trygaeus imagines himself as a shining bridegroom fondling Opora’s breasts (859–64), the audience may think of the slave really doing offstage what his master is then imagining.” (Walín 2009, 33) Trygaeus and the slave’s shared sexual experiences and proclivities would qualify as more ‘production of similarity’ in Aristophanes. Even if Walín’s claims are dismissed as over-reading fantastical material, his insights lead to the same conclusion as Todd’s: “there is no hint of a threat to the free citizen women.”

¹⁶¹ Herodas 5.1-3: λέγε μοι σύ, Γάστρων, ἦδ' ὑπερκορῆς οὔτω / ὅστ' οὐκέτ' ἀρκεῖ τὰμά σοι σκέλεα κινεῖν / ἀλλ' Ἀμφυταίη τῆι Μένωνος ἐγκεισαι;

¹⁶² Ibid. 5.6-7: Βίτιννα, δοῦλός εἰμι· χρῶ ὅτι Βούλῃ <μοι> / καὶ μὴ τό μευ αἶμα νύκτα κημέρην πῖνε.

¹⁶³ Ibid. 5.33-4: χιλίας μὲν ἐς τὸ νῶτον ἐγκόψαι... χιλίας δὲ τῆι γαστρὶ.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. 5.26: ἀνθρωπὸς εἰμ', ἥμαρτον. Ibid. 5.63-8

you may lift her children in your arms.”¹⁶⁵ David Konstan argues that this is meant to drag Bitinna back “to ordinary social life and practices, and thereby distract her from her too-intense concern with a slave lover.”¹⁶⁶ Kydilla’s supplication is momentarily ineffective, though, and Bitinna exclaims, “I should spare this seventh-generation slave? If I didn’t even try [to punish him], who wouldn’t rightly spit in my face?”¹⁶⁷ Kydilla’s begging seems to sink in a few lines later, and Bitinna relents her anger, telling Gastron to “give thanks to her [Kydilla], whom I love no less than Batyllis, having raised her with my own two hands.”¹⁶⁸ Evidently the appeal to a happy, married future for the mistress’ daughter tugged Bitinna’s memory back to how she lovingly cared for her domestic Kydilla since childhood. The reminder of the mistress’ close, nearly familial relationship with one of her slaves convinces her not to destroy the relationship she has with the other. Significantly, she seems in no way embarrassed by her relationship with Gastron or worried that it will detract from her social status.¹⁶⁹ Rather, she asserts that, by taking

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. 5.69-72:

¹⁶⁶ Konstan 1989, 276

¹⁶⁷ Herodas 5.74-6: ἀφέω τοῦτον / τὸν ἐπτάδουλον; καὶ τίς οὐκ ἀπαντῶσα / ἔς μεν δικαίως τὸ πρόσωπον ἐμπύτοι;

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. 5.81-3: ἔχε τὴν χάριν ταύτη, / ἦν οὐδὲν ἦσον ἢ Βατυλλίδα στέργω, / ἐν τῆσι χερσὶ τῆς ἐμῆσι θρέψασα.

¹⁶⁹ This contrasts wildly with American antebellum through early 20th century sexual norms where master-class White women suffered immense social backlash should they cross the Colour Line sexually. (Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present* 1985, 149-51) For example, Charles Ball’s slave narrative relates the life story of the daughter of a Georgia planter who had an affair with a slave that resulted in a child. Her father called together the “different heads of the families connected with his own” to figure out a way in which “the honor of the family might be saved.” One of her uncles refused to hide the woman’s secret, ostensibly out of “a tenderness of the good name of his own family,” but really because he had “the hope of ruining his niece, and forcing her father to disinherit her, in favor of his own children.” This doesn’t quite happen, but nevertheless “the mother was degraded from her rank in society,” and when she was pointed out as a mulatto boy’s mother, she “drew her veil over her face, [and] said nothing,” while Ball’s mistress “commanded” the woman to expound on all the sultry details. Ball mentions the double standard whereby “no inquiry is made concerning the father” of mulatto “children, whose mothers are slaves... except as a matter of curiosity amongst the white ladies, or of jest and merriment amongst his companions and friends.” (Shugert 1836, 307-12)

Gastron as a lover, she raised his standing and “placed him among men.”¹⁷⁰ Moreover, she is perfectly willing to ‘air her dirty laundry’ by having the slave punished publicly for his infidelity. If her sexual relationship with Gastron was taboo or, as Konstan argues, a symptom of how “she violates the Classical (Athenian) ideal of management,”¹⁷¹ I imagine that Kydilla’s appeal would have stressed that her mistress’ actions would embarrass or socially harm herself. Instead, Herodas presents us with a single, perhaps widowed, mother for whom the taking of a slave into her bed holds no stigma, provided that she keeps him faithful. His sexuality is not demonised. It is not threatening. His inability to restrain his sexual appetite is what makes him, like every man in Aristophanes’ *Peace*, human (ἄνθρωπός εἰμι, ἥμαρτον).

As with laziness, intelligence, and thievery, sexuality is another means by which ancient comedy ‘produced similarity’ between the social classes. As far as there are examples of slaves expressing sexual desire and acting upon it, their actions are indistinguishable from those of free and citizen characters. A far cry from the demonization and hyper-exaggeration of male slaves’ sexuality in the American context, the Greeks saw masters’ and slaves’ sex as a common point of humanity.

Conclusion

In each of the stereotype themes explored in this chapter, ancient Greek comedy stresses slave-citizen similarity more often than difference. Slave characters share with citizen ones the same range of laziness and industriousness, the same range of stupidity and intelligence, the same proclivity to theft, and the same sort of lust. The Athenians’

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. 5.15: ἢ σε θεῖσ' ἐν ἀνθρώποις. This is the same language with which Trimalchio in the *Satyricon* expresses how he was made a freedman. Cf. Petronius *Satyricon* 39: Patrono meo ossa bene quiescant, qui me hominem inter homines voluit esse.

¹⁷¹ Konstan 1989, 280

democratic ethos, their regular use of trained and educated slaves as ‘fellow-workers’ and skilled administrators, as well as their occasional incorporation of freed slaves into their citizenry, facilitated slave stereotypes that stand at odds with those of antebellum America. The clever, courageous, and industrious slave characters were surely influenced by the Athenians’ experiences with working, rowing, and socialising in close proximity to the still or recently enslaved. The Athenians’ experience also helps to explain why comedy so often depicts slave resistance, such as the avoidance and refusal of tasks, the ‘sporting’ theft from free folk, and the undermining of a master behind his back. Labouring Athenians knew that their own loyalty to employers and commanders was not inborn and had its limits, and comedy invited them to identify with the rather grumpy loyalty that the slave characters gave to their masters. Nonetheless comedy worked to legitimise slaveholding by portraying master characters as benevolent for incorporating slave characters so closely into their fictional families, and for indulging their slaves’ common, human need to butt against authority. Comedy’s mastery is based upon an understanding of common humanity, not upon slave-specific or racial ‘knowledge’ like in antebellum America, and thereby the genre construes its slavery as ‘just’.

Chapter 2: Tragedy's Slaves

In Aristophanes' *Frogs* the dead tragedians Aeschylus and Euripides face off in a competition of literary criticism. First prize is a ticket out of Hades. Obviously the scene is filled to the brim with jokes and comic exaggerations, but Aristophanes has a knack for funny-because-it's-true comedy, and much of what each poet character claims about himself and his rival hits that mark. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Euripides' boast about his female and enslaved characters:

Εὐρ. ἔπειτ' ἀπὸ τῶν πρώτων ἐπῶν οὐδὲν παρήκ' ἂν ἀργόν,
ἀλλ' ἔλεγεν ἡ γυνή τέ μοι χῶ δοῦλος οὐδὲν ἦττον,
χῶ δεσπότης χῆ παρθένος χῆ γραῦς ἄν. **Αἴσ.** εἶτα δῆτα
οὐκ ἀποθανεῖν σε ταῦτ' ἐχρῆν τολμῶντα; **Εὐρ.** μὰ τὸν Ἀπόλλω:
δημοκρατικὸν γὰρ αὐτ' ἔδρων.

Euripides: From the first words, I let nothing lay fallow,
but in my work the woman spoke, the slave no less so,
also the master, the maiden, and the hag.

Aeschylus: Then, is it not right that you die for daring these things?

Euripides: By Apollo, no! For, I accomplished something
*democratic.*¹⁷²

Page duBois writes off Euripides' 'democratic' tendencies as simple "eccentricity," parts of "the unusual habits of his drama, which allowed space and time for representations absent from other tragedies."¹⁷³ Neil Croally, otherwise so attuned to Euripides' didactic goals, similarly treats the tragedian's 'accomplishment', his "determination to allow what is marginal to speak at the centre," as one of the "peculiarities of [his] drama."¹⁷⁴ Perhaps dramatically Euripides is 'peculiar', but the values underlying his artistic strategies are virtually pedestrian in the context of fifth century Athens. As Justina Gregory elegantly

¹⁷² Aristophanes *Frogs* 948-952

¹⁷³ duBois 2003, 144

¹⁷⁴ Croally 1994, 15. Croally is so unconcerned with slavery as an issue in need of tragedy's instruction that the above *Frogs* lines are never referenced in his book, not even in his short section about Euripides' challenging the free-slave polarity of Greek thought.

argues, “Euripides’ attentiveness to personal responsibility, his insistence that character—not birth or station—defines the noble or slave, his protest against abuses of power, his championing of the rights of the weak... in play after play... testify to an abiding passion for social justice that took as its point of departure the democratic principles of equality and freedom.”¹⁷⁵

For the discussion of slaves’ place in Euripides’ ‘passion’ for justice, the most significant of these ‘principles of equality’ is that tied to speech: *ισηγορία*. Amid the Old Oligarch’s grumbling, he explains that this ‘equality of speech’ is essential to the smooth functioning of direct democracy, because “if only the noble spoke and planned, it would be good for them and their ilk, and not good for the masses, but now a base man, wishing to stand and speak, discovers what is good for him and those like him.”¹⁷⁶ This Oligarch complains that his city even “established *ισηγορία* between the slaves and the free, and between metics and citizens.”¹⁷⁷ As much as this offends his elitist sensibilities, he acknowledges that it was done with reason (*εικότως*). If slaves or metics had to live voicelessly in Athens, fear that their needs (for justice, safety, and free commerce) will not be met would compel them to leave the city, disrupting its “plethora of trades and its fleet,” both of which depend on their labour.¹⁷⁸ Rather than muzzle its underclasses, the Athenian democracy allowed subordinates to voice their opinions so that the citizens could make fully informed decisions about the running of their city and understand the

¹⁷⁵ Gregory 1991, 188

¹⁷⁶ Old Oligarch 1.6: *εἰ μὲν γὰρ οἱ χρηστοὶ ἔλεγον καὶ ἐβουλεύοντο, τοῖς ὁμοίοις σφίσιν αὐτοῖς ἦν ἀγαθὰ, τοῖς δὲ δημοτικοῖς οὐκ ἀγαθὰ: νῦν δὲ λέγων ὁ βουλόμενος ἀναστάς, ἄνθρωπος πονηρός, ἐξευρίσκει τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτῷ τε καὶ τοῖς ὁμοίοις αὐτῷ.*

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. 1.12: *ισηγορίαν καὶ τοῖς δούλοις πρὸς τοὺς ἐλευθέρους ἐποιήσαμεν—καὶ τοῖς μετοίκους πρὸς τοὺς ἀστούς.*

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.: *δεῖται ἡ πόλις μετοίκων διὰ τε τὸ πλῆθος τῶν τεχνῶν καὶ διὰ τὸ ναυτικόν.*

consequences of these decisions for people other than themselves.¹⁷⁹ The ancient democratic ethos is not just a belief in personal equality or the fluidity of social distinctions, but also a belief in the utility of honestly considering all available points of view so as to make the best collective choices.¹⁸⁰

Discovering which point of view offers the best solution in any given situation is difficult, though, and it would be easy to privilege certain points of view along traditional polarising lines: the ‘well-born’ trump the lowly, men trump women, and free trump slaves. This is where Euripides’ commitment to *ισηγορία* onstage comes into play. His writing of significant speaking roles for slaves and women served an instructive purpose for the democracy’s citizens, who were still developing “the habit of scrutiny and the expectation of rational justification for positions held.”¹⁸¹ Just like his free male characters, some of Euripides’ slaves and women soberly interpret situations and offer

¹⁷⁹ This contrasts wildly with antebellum American practices, as Frederick Douglass explains, describing a “poor” slave who, “for having found fault with his master, he was now to be sold to a Georgia trader. ... Without a moment’s warning, he was snatched away, and forever sundered, from his family and friends, by a hand more unrelenting than death. This is the penalty of telling the truth, of telling the simple truth, in answer to a series of plain questions. ... The slaveholders have been known to send in spies among their slaves, to ascertain their views and feelings in regard to their condition. The frequency of this has had the effect to establish among the slaves the maxim, that a still tongue makes a wise head. They suppress the truth rather than take the consequences of telling it, and in so doing prove themselves a part of the human family.” (Douglass, Frederick Douglass: The Narrative and Selected Writings 1984, 33-4)

¹⁸⁰ Of this sort of well-informed decision making the lawgiver Solon is paradigmatic in that after listening to the political complaints of the rich and the poor he decided both sides’ desires were too self-interested and instituted the democratic reforms benefitting each side. As explains Aristotle (*Ath. Pol.* 11.2), “the demos expected him to enact everything’s redistribution, and the notables expected that he would return things back to their previous ordering, or alter it by a small degree; however, Solon withstood both sides, ... saving his country and enacting the best set of laws.” ὁ μὲν γὰρ δῆμος ᾔετο πάντ’ ἀνάδαστα ποιήσεν αὐτόν, οἱ δὲ γνῶριμοὶ πάλιν εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν τάξιν ἀποδώσειν, ἢ μικρὸν παραλλάξειν. ὁ δὲ Σόλων ἀμφοτέροις ἠναντιώθη, ... σώσας τὴν πατρίδα καὶ τὰ βέλτιστα νομοθετήσας.

¹⁸¹ Croally 1994, 2. In taking tragedy as instructive, I am, of course, following Aristophanes’ example. His *Frogs* repeatedly has the tragedians claim to teach (954, 971-2, & 1019). Euripides is an especially avid teacher, saying the purpose of his art is “cleverness and advice, that we make the men in our cities better.” δεξιότητος καὶ νοουθεσίας, ὅτι βελτίους τε ποιῶμεν / τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν. (1009-10) Aristophanes explicitly claimed that some of Euripides’ most effective lessons were concerned with slave-owning (*Frogs* 971-92). Robert Beck has argued at length that the tragedians, especially Aeschylus, performed moral instruction for their city: “Clearly the purpose of seeing [the ‘inevitability’ of moral retribution] on stage was to teach ‘not to do wrong.’” (Beck 1987, 6) See also: Gregory 2002, Croally 1994, and Gregory 1991.

sage advice, while others are not so capable. No class or gender is invariably trustworthy and so the traditional polarities of free men bettering slaves and women break down. This is the ‘production of similarity’ at work. The tragedian forces the audience to consider the words being spoken rather than the person speaking them in order to assess the worth of a speech. In this way he cautions the Athenians not to rely on generalisations or stereotypes while judging a person’s value. It must be done on an individual, or case-by-case, basis.¹⁸²

As evaluating differing opinions on an issue is difficult, so too is understanding the consequences that a decision will incur, and, in terms of slavery, the tragedians are again instructive. They present to Athenian audiences deeply human depictions of war-captives and frank admissions of the soul-crushing effects slavery often has on those enslaved. Slavers cleave wives from their husbands and children from their mothers. For some of these individuals the suffering blurs together suicide and escape. Tragedians elicited sympathy from the spectators by stressing that slavery could befall anyone. Tragedy unabashedly looks upon the evils of slavery as evils, and its representation of slaving practices would have haunted the Athenians as they deliberated over matters such as the enslavement of Mytilene, Melos, and Skyros. We might wish that these tragedies convinced the Athenians to abolish slavery, but at least they persuaded the city to see its slaves as human beings and to empathise with them during the painful transition from a free to enslaved individual.

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that, as far as concerns slavery, tragedy instructs the audience primarily in two ways: to resist polarity-based generalisations and

¹⁸² Gregory 2002, 160

judge people as individuals, as well as to check one's self-interestedness and consider all points of view in any given situation. The section on slaves' intelligence and bravery will explore how tragic slaves act and speak in manners virtually identical to those of free characters, good or bad, and how the tragedians thereby 'produced similarity'. This will be juxtaposed with antebellum America's more common 'production of difference' wherein slaves and free, Blacks and Whites, have their conduct diametrically opposed. The section on slaves' loyalty will explore the way in which such anti-stereotype messages are not incompatible with an effective slaving ideology. By treating slaves as fellow human beings, and even as family, tragic masters 'earned' their subordinates' loyalty. Unlike in American fiction, slaves' loyalty is never naturalised as an inherent characteristic of everyone in their class. The section on female slave sexuality will explore how all three tragedians present captive women as explicitly innocent mediums for discord in a household. Masters' sexual self-interest has them introduce enslaved women into their households, and their complete lack of consideration of their wives' point of view leads to the households' destruction, because the mistresses succumb to jealousy, indulge in stereotypes about slave women's sexuality, and in so doing commit catastrophic, tragic errors. I will demonstrate that this emotional dynamic is realistic in that it closely parallels accounts from non-fiction antebellum slave narratives while contrasting sharply with American stereotypes about Black hyper-sexuality.

I. Loyalty: Rejecting Freedom, Slaves-to-Slaves, and Familial Relations

I want to begin the discussion of slaves' loyalty in Greek tragedy with Euripides' *Hecuba*, since it offers a scene that starkly distinguishes it from the propaganda of proslavery writers in antebellum America. A common trope in that proslavery literature is

the offering of a loyal slave his or her freedom as a reward, only to have the slave reject the offer, preferring a continued life of servitude. In George Tucker's *Valley of Shenandoah*, for instance, when the Grayson family is liquidating its plantation tools and slaves, Mrs. Grayson offers her 'Granny Mott' a deal whereby the old slave could live out her days as a freedwoman, in her "accustomed" cabin, while Mrs. Grayson and her daughter, Louisa, moved "near the Opeccan." "Oh! No, my mistress," cried Granny Mott, "I must go with you... I must live and die with my old master's child... How should I do without *my* Louisa? God bless *my* child!"¹⁸³ Mott feels so closely incorporated into the family that she despairs leaving them more than being separated from her actual children and her "numerous progeny."¹⁸⁴ The value of such scenes as propaganda for the planters' benevolence and for slaves' lack of a desire for freedom is clear, and it will be discussed at length in section IV.ii of Chapter 3.

Greek tragedy does not so readily propagandise. In Euripides' *Hecuba*, the namesake queen-captive suffers the murders of her children, her daughter sacrificed to Achilles' ghost at the hands of Neoptolemus, and her son murdered by Polymestor, the Thracian king under whose care that son, Polydorus, had been entrusted at the outset of the Trojan War. These woes and the isolation that follows warp the mind of the once-queen of Troy. They literally dehumanise her. She savagely thirsts for the blood of Polymestor, and, after she takes her revenge, she metamorphoses into a dog and drowns herself in the sea. Her derangement, the animalisation forced on her by the cruelty of slavery,¹⁸⁵ must inform the interpretation of the manumission offer made to her, unique in the extant plays.

¹⁸³ Tucker [1824] 1970, 2.198-9.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. 1.81

¹⁸⁵ duBois 2003, 145

Agamemnon, hounded by Hecuba's supplications, says, "What is it that you are looking for? Is it just to be awarded a life of freedom? For, in your case, this is a simple matter." "No, not at all!" foams Hecuba. "I am willing to be a slave for the rest of my life, provided I take revenge for the evil deeds [of Polymestor]." ¹⁸⁶ The only lines of Greek where a slave rejects her freedom are spoken by a woman who is explicitly not in her right mind, one who has had her "maternal tenderness" transformed into "terrifying vengefulness." ¹⁸⁷ Her once good judgment, her 'nobility', has been corrupted, and the play suggests that the only way to avoid the corrosive influence of slavery is to die before its effects have taken hold. ¹⁸⁸ This is made clear by contrast with Polyxena, who goes to the grave uttering noble words (καλῶς εἶπας) and acting so bravely before the sacrificial knife that the attending Greeks chastised any man who was not moved by "a girl so stout-hearted and excellent in her spirit." ¹⁸⁹ Freedom, or at least some semblance of it, motivates Polyxena's actions. She fears dying as a slave, ¹⁹⁰ and her bravery at the sacrificial altar allows her to demand that the guards take their hands off of her so that she can willingly present herself to the knife, or, in her own words, "so that I die a free woman." ¹⁹¹ The κάλη Polyxena died to preserve the façade of her freedom, but the corrupted Hecuba traded away any hope for liberty in exchange for revenge, a motivation that sharply differentiates Hecuba from loyalty-motivated antebellum stereotypes.

¹⁸⁶ Euripides *Hecuba* 754-7: Ἄγ. τί χρῆμα μαστεύουσα; μῶν ἐλεύθερον / αἰῶνα θέσθαι; ῥάδιον γάρ ἐστί σοι. Ἔκ. οὐ δῆτα: τοὺς κακοὺς δὲ τιμωρουμένη / αἰῶνα τὸν σύμπαντα δουλεῦν θέλω.

¹⁸⁷ Segal 1993, 161. Cf. Euripides Fr.129a, where Andromeda says she will be Perseus' "servant, wife, or slave," if he will save her, stressing her desperation.

¹⁸⁸ Euripides Fr.245.8-9: "Never go into slavery, alive or willingly, but elect to die in the manner of the free." μὴ πὶ δουλείαν ποτὲ / ζῶν ἐκὼν ἔλθῃς παρὸν σοι κατθανεῖν ἐλευθέρως

¹⁸⁹ Segal 1993, 161.; Euripides *Hecuba* 579-80: οὐκ εἶ τι δώσων τῇ περισσ' εὐκαρδίῳ / ψυχὴν τ' ἀρίστη;

¹⁹⁰ Daitz 1971, 219-20; Euripides *Hecuba* 420: δούλη θανοῦμαι, πατρὸς οὔτ' ἐλευθέρου.

¹⁹¹ Ibid. *Hecuba* 550: ὡς ἐλευθέρα θάνω.

Clearly, in this play Euripides does not present slavery as a boon to the slave—as proslavery antebellum authors insisted when their slave characters turned down freedom¹⁹²—and Hecuba’s willingness to persist in her state is offered as proof of her animalisation.¹⁹³

Yet Euripides’ tragedies do offer a number of enslaved characters who seem all too willing to persist in their state of slavery, and who insist on continuing to subordinate themselves to their now also-enslaved mistresses. In the *Andromache*, the ex-princess has to correct a servant by telling her, “You are my fellow-slave,”¹⁹⁴ because, in the slave’s mind, their relationship has not changed. “O mistress! I do not flee from calling you by this name, since I deemed you worthy [of it] in your home, when we were living on the plains of Troy, and I was a friend to you and your then-living husband.”¹⁹⁵ Andromache then sends this woman to summon Peleus, a deed that later saves the Trojan princess’ life. Similarly, Hecuba in the *Trojan Women* has charge of the chorus of slaves as well as additional, silent handmaiden characters.¹⁹⁶ In her namesake play, she again orders about a silent handmaiden and she feels entitled to her fellow-slaves’ possessions, which she intends to use in the burial of Polyxena. “I will gather ornamentation from the captives who live alongside me inside of the tents,” she declares, “should one of them, escaping

¹⁹² W.L.G. Smith’s novel, *Life at the South*, provides a most instructive example, when the slave Hector rejects his master’s offer of freedom. “‘I dam to hell, massa, if I guine to be free!’ roared the adhesive black, in a tone of unrestrainable determination. ... ‘De ting ain’t right; and enty I know wha’ kind of ting freedom is wid black man? Ha! you make Hector free, ‘come wuss more nor poor buckrah; he tief out of de shop—he get drunk and lie in de ditch; den, if sick come, he roll, he toss in de wet grass of de stable; you come in de morning—Hector dead!’” (W. Smith 1852, 47) As Joy Jordan-Lake argues, “Smith connects damnation with freedom for slaves. ... By forcibly keeping slaves sober and honest, Hector testifies, slaveholders actually protect blacks’ best interests.” (Jordan-Lake 2005, 14)

¹⁹³ Daitz 1971, 222

¹⁹⁴ Euripides *Andromache* 64: σύνδουλος γὰρ εἶ.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid. 56-9: δέσποιν’, ἐγὼ τοι τοῦνομ’ οὐ φεύγω τόδε / καλεῖν σ’, ἐπεὶ περ καὶ κατ’ οἶκον ἠξίου / τὸν σόν, τὸ Τροίας ἠνίκ’ ᾠκοῦμεν πέδον, / εὐνοὺς δὲ καὶ σοὶ ζῶντί τ’ ἢ τῷ σῶ πόσει.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. *Trojan Women* 144-5; 462-7

the masters' notice, have kept some item stolen from their home."¹⁹⁷ Some scholars, such as Kelly Wrenhaven, have argued that the deference shown by these lowly slave characters constitutes proof that Euripides understood and employed Aristotle's "distinction between natural and conventional slavery."¹⁹⁸ I would strongly caution against this, because even though these slaves-to-slaves bestow exceptional levels of loyalty upon their ex-mistresses, Euripides never presents their devotion as natural. Like Comedy presents masters as 'earning' their slaves' loyalty, so too do the tragedians portray masters as procuring it, either by treating them kindly or as family.

Several tragic slaves are portrayed as being in a sort of familial relationship with their masters. The most overt example comes out of Euripides' *Ion*, when Creusa is on her way to the Delphic oracle. She is accompanied by her father's old παιδαγωγός, because, as she says, "it is sweet to experience good fortune with your loved ones," which the old slave certainly is, she explains. "Although I am your mistress, I tend to you as though to a father, like you did for my father."¹⁹⁹ "Oh, daughter," replies the παιδαγωγός, "Drag me, draw me, carry me to the temple... Aiding my limbs, be a doctor for my old age."²⁰⁰ She does so, and this familial sort of relationship underscores the old slave's and the chorus' outrage at the discovery that Creusa's husband has found himself a son from outside of this marriage. "We are betrayed, mistress," exclaims the tutor, "for I suffer with you. By your husband's scheming we have been assaulted and cast out of the house of

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. *Hecuba* 615-8: κόσμον τ' ἀγείρας' αἰχμαλωτίδων πάρα, / αἶ μοι πάρεδροι τῶνδ' ἔσω σκηνομάτων / ναίουσιν, εἴ τις τοὺς νεωστὶ δεσπότης / λαθοῦσ' ἔχει τι κλέμμα τῶν αὐτῆς δόμων.

¹⁹⁸ Wrenhaven 2012, 133; duBois 2003, 144-5, 151; *contra* McKeown 2007, 153-8.

¹⁹⁹ Euripides *Ion* 730-4: σὺν τοῖς φίλοις γὰρ ἠδὺ μὲν πράσσειν καλῶς ... ἐγὼ δέ σ', ὥσπερ καὶ σὺ πατέρ' ἐμόν ποτε, / δέσπον' ὄμως οὐσ' ἀντικηδεύω πατρός. Cf. the similar use of family titles at 925, 935, 942, 970, 1018

²⁰⁰ Ibid. *Ion* 735-40: ὦ θύγατερ... ἔλχ' ἔλκε πρὸς μέλαθρα καὶ κόμιζέ με... τοῦ γήρωσ δέ μοι / συνεκπονοῦσα κῶλον ἰατρὸς γενοῦ. Cf. *Helen* 701.

Erechtheus!”²⁰¹ In the *Medea*, Medea’s nurse laments along similar lines, when the παιδαγωγός of Medea’s children reports that Jason has married a new wife. “We are destroyed, if we add a new evil to the old we have not yet finished enduring!”²⁰² In the *Trojan Women*, Hecuba slips into using familial language to address the choral slaves over whom she has command. When the chorus asks why Hecuba is wailing, she replies, “Oh children, at the Argives’ ships the hand of the rower is already busy,” and when the chorus joins in the lamentation, Hecuba cries, “Oh child, you are restless in your soul.”²⁰³ By portraying mistresses as their old slave’s foster-daughter and as their young ones’ foster-mother, Euripides predicates slave loyalty on the forging of a deep, familial relationship. It is a relationship that even approaches reciprocity in the case of Creusa’s παιδαγωγός, whose treatment mirrors his own care-taking of Erechtheus, and who is eager to ‘repay’ his family for their supporting him.²⁰⁴

In some ways this familial relationship is similar to proslavery, antebellum American depictions of loyal slaves. As mentioned earlier, Granny Mott in George Tucker’s novel rejects her freedom so as to stay with her mistresses, one of whom she calls *her* child. Familial titles and affection are used to mask the exploitative and pecuniary basis of the master-slave relationship. The antebellum characterisation differs from the ancient one in the extent to which it naturalises the feigned familial relationship. In antebellum literature, the incorporation of the slave into the family is not an act or ritual performed,

²⁰¹ Ibid. *Ion* 808-11: δέσποινα, προδεδόμεσθα — σὺν γάρ σοι νοσῶ — / τοῦ σοῦ πρὸς ἀνδρός, καὶ μεμηχανημένως / ὑβρίζόμεσθα δωμάτων τ’ Ἐρεχθέως / ἐκβαλλόμεσθα.

²⁰² Ibid. *Medea* 78-9: ἀπωλόμεσθ’ ἄρ’, εἰ κακὸν προσοίσομεν / νέον παλαιῶ, πρὶν τόδ’ ἐξηγνηκέναι.

²⁰³ Ibid. *Trojan Women* 159-60, 182: ὦ τέκν’, Ἀργείων πρὸς ναῦς ἤδη / κινεῖται κωπῆρης χεῖρ... ὦ τέκνον, ὀρθρεῦοι σὰν ψυχάν.

²⁰⁴ The tutor expresses that he desires to kill Ion for Creusa as ‘repayment’ for his room and board. (*Ion* 852-3: τροφεῖα δεσπότης / ἀποδοῦς)

like the ancient's *καταχύσματα*, but a natural, racial quality of the slave mammy. For example, in Mary Schoolcraft's *The Black Gauntlet*, the mammy Phillis receives the following, stereotyping praise: "The whole wide world does not contain a more affectionate, unselfish foster-mother, than the black family-servant; indeed, the author has often seen more violent grief over the death of their white foster-child that she ever witnessed over the corpse of one of their own."²⁰⁵ As Joy Jordan-Lake has persuasively argued, pro-slavery novels defend the institution "by showing how slavery insures that black mothers will never be separated from the white children, whom, the novels insist, the mammies love more than their own."²⁰⁶ Euripides never goes so far, but he does tread similar ideological territory insofar as he never writes a lowly slave character who has a family of his or her own.²⁰⁷ Like antebellum authors' stereotypes about caretaker slaves' familial devotion, Euripides uses his loyal slaves to portray an "ideal familial configuration."²⁰⁸ This configuration is presented as the result of the masters' 'good' management rather than of any natural predilection for loyalty on the part of the slaves. Through fair treatment, even into old age, tragic masters and mistresses 'earn' their slaves' devotion. The concept of a natural slave, like Aristotle's, does not, in my opinion, seem to have permeated into Euripides' plays, though the tragedies are sympathetic to Greek proslavery ideology in that they portray slave loyalty as proof that there can be 'just' and 'victimless' slave ownership.

²⁰⁵ Schoolcraft 1860, 205; Jordan-Lake 2005, 68

²⁰⁶ Jordan-Lake 2005, 63

²⁰⁷ Menander's *Arbitration* includes a Syros who lives with a wife apart from his master, and who adopts an abandoned child. His love for his family is not compared with his loyalty to his master, though.

²⁰⁸ Jordan-Lake 2005, 64

II. Fitness for Citizenship

In Book 17 of the *Odyssey*, Odysseus wipes a tear from his cheek when he sees that his old dog, Argos, bereft of his master, sits complacently in heaps of the farm animals' dung. He asks Eumaeus, the 'noble' swineherd (δῖος ὑφορβός), why so beautiful a hound does not act in a way commensurate with that beauty. "Slaves, when their lords no longer master them, are not still willing to work fittingly," answers Eumaeus. "For, far-seeing Zeus steals from a man half of his excellence, when the day of slavery seizes him."²⁰⁹ While Homer predates the tragedians considerably, this passage is nonetheless illustrative of the sorts of prejudices against slaves that entrenched themselves into the Greeks' literary tradition.²¹⁰ Either slavery robs the slave of a complete personhood, or a slave lineage predetermines that a person will be born defective, but, as Justina Gregory elegantly argues, "all three tragedians contest the assumption of inescapable slavishness."²¹¹ The tragedians were neither the first nor the last ancient thinkers to dispute inherent slavishness, but rather they operated within a milieu that stretched from pre-Socratic philosophy to Roman era Stoicism.²¹²

²⁰⁹ Homer *Odyssey* 17.320-3: δμῶες δ', εὐτ' ἂν μηκέτ' ἐπικρατέωσιν ἄνακτες, / οὐκέτ' ἔπειτ' ἐθέλουσιν ἐναΐσιμα ἐργάζεσθαι: / ἥμισυ γάρ τ' ἀρετῆς ἀποαίνονται εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς / ἀνέρος, εὐτ' ἂν μιν κατὰ δούλιον ἦμαρ ἔλυσιν.

²¹⁰ Gregory 2002, 151-3. Gregory quotes, to similar effect, Theognis 535-8, on how "a freedom-bent child never springs from a servant mother." οὔτε ποτ' ἐκ δούλης τέκνον ἐλευθέριον. See also: Herodotus 4.1-4, where the Scythians battle with their wives' sons by way of slaves, winning only when they switch out their swords for whips.

²¹¹ Gregory 2002, 153. Cf. Croally 1994, 118.

²¹² Heraclitus of Ephesus (ca. 500 B.C.) insisted, for example, that "the thinking faculty is common to all," and that "all men have the capacity of knowing themselves and acting with moderation" (Fr. 113 & 116, trans. Freeman [1948] 1983, 32). This idea that the mind is a point of human commonality was utilised by Classical authors, as will be demonstrated in this chapter with respect to the tragedians, all the way through Stoic writers like Seneca. With it, they argued that while a person's body could be enslaved, their mind would remain 'free' as long as they conducted themselves in accordance with virtues, such as emotional self-control, physical moderation, and the Stoic acceptance of adversity. (eg. Seneca *On Benefits* 3.20.1; Epictetus 1.13; for a full discussion of the philosophical trend, see: Garnsey 1996, 64-86)

It has long been established in classical scholarship that Euripides took this contestation the furthest, “challenging and tampering with the justification of polarities such as slavery and freedom, nature and convention, Greek and barbarian.”²¹³ He did so primarily in two ways. Firstly, he littered his plays with lines and stanzas which attack the idea that freemen and slaves inherently differ in character. These sententious statements, especially if quoted for pointedly rhetorical purposes, could serve as ammunition for those arguing that slavery was unnatural, predicated only upon force, and did not fundamentally change the nature of those persons enslaved.²¹⁴ Secondly, Euripides portrayed ‘average’ slaves, like Aristophanes, as men and women who are as capable, intelligent, and flawed as his play’s powerful free characters. Thereby he ‘produced similarity’. Gregory is right to note that all of the tragedians participate in this style of ‘similarity’s production’,²¹⁵ but, because Euripides does so to a fuller extent, only his sententious statements and his depictions of ‘average’ slaves will be discussed here. Let us begin with a brief survey of his statements that had the potential to be used as anti-slavery or proslavery ammunition.

²¹³ Wrenhaven 2012, 139. Cf. Vlassopoulos 2013, 193; Tulpin 2004, 61; Garnsey 1996, 64-6; Croally 1994, esp. 70-119; Hall 1989, 215-23; Finley 1980, 120; Synodinou 1977, 24; Daitz 1971.

²¹⁴ Aristotle often made a point of quoting poets rhetorically and out of context, even for purposes antithetical to the purpose of the original text. For example, in the *Politics* he quotes Hesiod *Works and Days* 405: “First of all, a house, a woman, and an ox for ploughing [are needed].” The philosopher claims this bolsters his notion that the husband-wife and master-slave relationships are the primary elements of a household, “for there is an ox instead of a slave for the poor” (1252b11), even though Hesiod’s poem explicitly states the woman must be “a possession, not a wife” (406). A similar misconstruing of poetic material probably also occurred on the anti-slavery side of the debate, though no explicitly anti-slavery texts survive. Possible proslavery quotes will be discussed briefly below.

²¹⁵ Gregory argues that Aeschylus questions the free-slave, Greek-barbarian binaries by portraying Cassandra in the *Agamemnon* as losing neither her noble character (as emphasised by the chorus) nor her oracular abilities (1084: μένει τὸ θεῖον δουλίᾳ περ ἐν φρενί). She also quotes Sophocles’ propensity to distinguish between enslaved bodies and free minds both in fragments and in Deianeira’s praise of her nurse’s excellent advice (*Women of Trachis* 62-3; Gregory 2002, 153).

Fragments of Euripides are a particularly worthwhile source for the poet's sententious statements on slavery, because the short ones have already been robbed of their original context, allowing for simple demonstration of how Euripides' poetry could have been manipulated for rhetorical purposes. Out of Stobaeus' collection of Greek quotes comes a line perfect to spit at someone making light of a slave's plight: "Do you not see how great an evil the state of slavery is?"²¹⁶ Along similarly sympathetic lines runs this phrase, perhaps a choral interlude: "Alas, alas! How in every way the god has marked out the slave family for a lesser share."²¹⁷ A punchy phrase which drives home that slavery is predicated only upon force sprung from Euripides' *Archelaus*: "Among mortals, weaker people are habitually enslaved by the stronger."²¹⁸ For convincing someone that a slave can have moral virtue or even be an exemplar of moral rectitude, Euripides also has a stanza: "It is right for a wife that a woman always serve her, one who will not be silent about 'the just', hates 'the shameful', and holds it before [the wife's] eyes."²¹⁹ Other fragments of Euripides appear to condemn slaveholders who purchase such good and useful slaves, while at the same time admitting that slaves could indeed be, in certain respects, superior to their owners.²²⁰ One declares, "For it isn't right to acquire slaves that are better than their masters."²²¹

Unfortunately, Euripides' fragmentary plays can be plundered for the opposite rhetorical purpose. The slaveholding elites' views trickled into his works, like this

²¹⁶ Euripides Fr. 217: τὸ δοῦλον οὐχ ὀρᾶς ὅσον κακόν;

²¹⁷ Ibid. Fr. 218: φεῦ, φεῦ, τὸ δοῦλον ὡς ἀπανταχῆ γένος / πρὸς τὴν ἐλάσσω μοῖραν ὥρισεν θεός.

²¹⁸ Ibid. Fr. 261: οἱ γὰρ ἥσσονες / τοῖς κρείσσοσιν φιλοῦσι δουλεῦειν βροτῶν.

²¹⁹ Ibid. Fr. 410: τοιάνδε χρὴ γυναικὶ προσπολεῖν ἀεὶ / ἥτις τὸ μὲν δίκαιον οὐ σιγήσεται, / τὰ δ' αἰσχρὰ μισεῖ καὶ κατ' ὀφθαλμοὺς ἔχει.

²²⁰ Synodinou 1977, 85

²²¹ Euripides Fr. 51: δούλους γὰρ οὐ / καλὸν πεπᾶσθαι κρείσσονας τῶν δεσποτῶν. Cf. Fr. 251.

declaration: “We free men live by slaves.”²²² This tragedian’s poetry could equip the rebuttal of Fr. 410’s claim that servants can be morally upright: “I’ve proved it. The slave family is wicked: all stomach, it looks to nothing besides.”²²³ A fragment denigrates people for deigning to spend time with slaves: “It is intemperate to be in the company of slaves’ children.”²²⁴ Another denies that slaves are to be trusted at all: “Whoever trusts a slave man, he brings a great folly upon himself, in my opinion.”²²⁵ An appeal to the authority of the tragedian could be made in order to claim that slaves ought to know their place as mere tools of their master: “It is never right that a man, being a slave, chase free thoughts or look to laziness.”²²⁶ Euripides’ *Alexander* belabours this point even further: “Indeed, Priam, you are wise, but nevertheless I tell you: there is no greater burden, no possession more vile or useless for the household, than a slave thinking more than is appropriate for him to think.”²²⁷ This fragment of the *Alexander*—fragments 49 and 51 also belong to this play—would have far less of a proslavery effect when spoken on stage, because the tragedy in its entirety was directed at challenging the unsympathetic views of the slaves attacked in these quotes. The *Alexander* is about how Paris, prince of Troy, is received back into his rightful family after he had been exposed as a child, raised as a slave near Mt. Ida, but had proven his aristocratic worth in an athletic contest conducted by Priam. That the play’s denigrating statements about slaves were portrayed as the losing side of an argument is made clear by fragments 62a and 62b, the first of

²²² Ibid. Fr. 1019: δούλοισι γάρ τε ζῶμεν οἱ ἐλεύθεροι.

²²³ Ibid. Fr. 49: ἤλεγχον· οὕτω γὰρ κακὸν δοῦλον γένος· / γαστήρ ἅπαντα, τοῦπίσω δ’ οὐδὲν σκοπεῖ.

²²⁴ Ibid. Fr. 976: ἀκόλασθ’ ὁμίλειν γίγνεται δούλων τέκνα.

²²⁵ Ibid. Fr. 86: ὅστις δὲ δούλω φωτὶ πιστεύει βροτῶν, / πολλήν παρ’ ἡμῖν μωρίαν ὀφλισκάνει.

²²⁶ Ibid. Fr. 216: οὐ χρή ποτ’ ἄνδρα δοῦλον ὄντ’ ἐλευθέρας / γνώμας διώκειν οὐδ’ ἐς ἀργίαν βλέπειν.

²²⁷ Ibid. Fr. 48: σοφὸς μὲν οὖν εἶ, Πρίαμ’, ὅμως δέ σοι λέγω· / δούλου φρονούντος μείζον ἢ φρονεῖν χρεῶν / οὐκ ἔστιν ἄχθος μείζον οὐδὲ δώμασι / κτήσις κακίων οὐδ’ ἀνωφελεστέρα.

which has Hector chastise Deiphobus for feeling outraged that a slave (Paris) triumphed over these royal brothers in the games, and the second sees Hector praise Paris' efforts and tell Deiphobus that he has no one but himself to blame for failing to claim victory over a slave. It is unlikely that the *Alexander* is unique in its undercutting of its anti-slave statements. Slaveholders may not have been so scrupulous as to care about the context in which they found their favourite, poetic condemnations of slaves, but avid fans of Euripides would always be prepared to out-quote them and undermine their claims.

While some of the foregoing fragments disapprove of slaves' thinking 'free thoughts', they do not deny the slaves' potential to do so.²²⁸ Euripides is resolute that a slave, no matter his or her previous social status, was capable of ethical, intellectual, and manly virtue (ἀρετή, σωφροσύνη, ἀνδρεία). The slaves' minds could, and often did, remain 'free' in the tragedian's plays, presenting a counter-argument to Homer's 'day of slavery' discussed earlier. Hence Euripides' fragments and complete tragedies insist that the cardinal difference between free and enslaved individuals is merely status and circumstance, merely the title 'slave'.²²⁹ As is true of Menander's comedies, Euripides' virtuous characters exist on either side of the free-slave divide. This is expressed in a fragmentary messenger speech from Euripides' *Melanippe Captive*, where the speaker denies that there are easily spotted markers of inner virtue, certainly nothing tied to a prestigious lineage: "I do not know how rightly to spot 'good birth'. For I say that those who are brave and just are 'better born', even if they have slave parents, than those with

²²⁸ Synodinou 1977, 86-7

²²⁹ Gregory 2002, 155: "Euripides implies that 'slave' is a pejorative label bearing no necessary relationship to the true status of an individual. ...Euripides here takes up the notion, familiar from Parmenides and Gorgias, of a gap between language and reality and applies it to the name of slave and to the individual who is designated by that *onoma*."

empty pretensions.”²³⁰ Another fragment similarly declares that slaves can maintain an element of ‘inner freedom’ through bravery: “Who is a slave, really, who pays no mind to dying?”²³¹ A pair of fragments nearly identically stress that only the title of ‘slave’ differentiates between free and enslaved, and that this title hides pre-eminently virtuous men in plain sight: “The name does not ruin the good slave, but many are better than free men.”²³² This is exactly the sentiment that Creusa’s παιδαγωγός expresses after offering to kill Ion for her: “One thing brings shame to slaves: the name. In every other respect, in no way worse than free men is the slave, who is good.”²³³

Page duBois would caution not to “disregard” this speech’s “ironic burden,” since the παιδαγωγός offers his murderous services “precisely because [Ion] is the worthless child of ‘some slave woman’.”²³⁴ His own conduct calls into question whether a slave even could be a ‘good man’ as opposed to “the voice of low pragmatism and opportunism.”²³⁵ Justina Gregory has a more nuanced take on this scene. She argues that the παιδαγωγός in *Ion* undermines his own claim that not all slaves are alike—some are good, some are bad—by projecting onto bastards the stereotype that they are all naturally at enmity with their fathers’ legitimate children and lawful wife; however, the context proves the slave should have extended his ideas about the possible ‘goodness’ of slaves to bastards, since “Ion is not a threat to Creusa, as he assumes.” The play proves his point about the

²³⁰ Euripides Fr. 495.40-3: ἐγὼ μὲν <οὖν> οὐκ οἶδ’ ὅτω σκοπεῖν χρεῶν / τὴν εὐγένειαν. τοὺς γὰρ ἀνδρείους φύσιν / καὶ τοὺς δικαίους τῶν κενῶν δοξασμάτων, / κὰν ὅσι δούλων, εὐγενεστέρους λέγω. Cf. Fr. 61b

²³¹ Ibid. Fr. 958: τίς δ’ ἔστι δούλος τοῦ θανεῖν ἄφροντις ὄν;

²³² Ibid. Fr. 511: δούλον γὰρ ἐσθλὸν τοῦνομ’ οὐ διαφθερεῖ, / πολλοὶ δ’ ἀμείνους εἰσὶ τῶν ἐλευθέρων. Cf. Fr. 831: “To many slaves the name is shameful, but their mind is freer than non-slaves’.” πολλοῖσι δούλοις τοῦνομ’ αἰσχρόν, ἢ δὲ φρήν / τῶν οὐχὶ δούλων ἔστ’ ἐλευθερωτέρα.

²³³ Ibid. *Ion* 854-6: ἔν γάρ τι τοῖς δούλοισιν αἰσχύνῃν φέρει, / τοῦνομα: τὰ δ’ ἄλλα πάντα τῶν ἐλευθέρων / οὐδὲν κακίων δούλος, ὅστις ἐσθλὸς ἦ.

²³⁴ duBois 2003, 151

²³⁵ Ibid. 145

inefficacy of the free-slave polarity by portraying him as blundering in his attachment to a legitimate-bastard polarity.²³⁶ I would add that the immediate hatred felt by the παιδαγωγός toward Ion actually aligns him with Euripides' free characters, in that his reaction is almost identical to that of Menelaus in the *Andromache*. His foster-father relationship with Creusa mirrors Menelaus' relationship to his daughter Hermione. The παιδαγωγός even has more reasonable grounds for his murderous intent, since Ion is a new addition to the household, whereas Andromache's Molossus was born to Neoptolemus before he ever married Hermione. Creusa's problem legitimately is an inability to produce heirs except through a liaison with Apollo. Hermione's is a lack of patience.²³⁷ Euripides may not portray this παιδαγωγός as a perfectly moral man, but the playwright nevertheless uses the character to question the traditional free-slave and legitimate-bastard polarities of Greek thought, and he presents the slave as acting in a manner commensurate with a free, albeit villainous father.

Euripides' *Helen* also partakes in the 'good' slave and 'free' mind themes. A long-time servant of Menelaus wells up with emotion when the Spartan reunites with Helen, remembering how he carried a torch in their wedding procession. He says this kind of emotional attachment to his master's affairs is one of the traits which characterise 'good' slaves.²³⁸ The other, he declares, is a 'free' mind: "Would that I, though a slave woman bore me, be numbered amid the 'good' slaves, having not the free title, but a free mind. For this is better than to be assailed, being one man, by dual evils: to have a wicked mind

²³⁶ Gregory 2002, 154-5

²³⁷ Remember Andromache's earnest pronouncement that "since [Neoptolemus] married the Laconian Hermione, the master [has been] spurning my bed, his slave's." ἐπεὶ δὲ τὴν Λάκαιναν Ἑρμιόνην γαμῆι / τοῦμὸν παρώσας δεσπότης δοῦλον λέχος, (*Andromache* 29-30) Hermione, with Orestes, will eventually give birth to Tisamenus, proving she is not barren like Creusa.

²³⁸ Cf. *Medea* 54-5, *Alcestis* 813, Fr. 85

and [to have] to listen, being a slave, to your other fellow creatures.”²³⁹ The quintessential example of what it means to have a ‘free mind’ is expressed by the young Achilles in Euripides’ *Iphigenia at Aulis*. He proclaims: “If they lead rightly, I will obey the Atreides, but if they do not lead rightly, I will not obey. Here and in Troy I will exhibit my free nature.”²⁴⁰ As Gregory interprets, “a free man can measure the orders he receives against his own internal ethical standard and decide whether to obey or disobey.”²⁴¹ The *Helen* offers us a concrete example of exactly this sort of ‘free’ mind at work in a slave. When Theoclymenus tries to barge into his sister’s quarters with the intent to murder her, a loyal and ‘free’-minded slave bars the way. “I will not release your robes, for you are rushing into a great evil.” The king indignantly barks, “Will you, a slave, rule your master?” “Yes,” replies the slave, “for I am thinking rightly.” After a short back-and-forth, the king declares, “It is not right that you judge my affairs.” “Indeed, it is right, if I reckon better.” Theoclymenus threatens to murder this slave, and the brave servant stands fast. “Kill me. You will not kill your sibling except over my dead body, since it is most glorious for noble slaves to die for the sake of their masters.”²⁴²

²³⁹ Ibid. *Helen* 728-33: ἐγὼ μὲν εἶην, κεί πέφυχ’ ὁμῶς λάτρις, / ἐν τοῖσι γενναίοισιν ἠριθμημένος / δούλοισι, τοῦνομι’ οὐκ ἔχων ἐλεύθερον, / τὸν νοῦν δέ: κρείσσον γὰρ τόδ’ ἢ δυοῖν κακοῖν / ἐν’ ὄντα χρῆσθαι, τὰς φρένας τ’ ἔχειν κακὰς / ἄλλων τ’ ἀκούειν δοῦλον ὄντα τῶν πέλας. This preoccupation with a ‘free’ mind as a consolation in slavery finds a subtle contrast in antebellum characterisations of slaves. A travel writer sketching the South Santee reports: “the slaves themselves wanted only the name of freemen to be as free, and probably as happy, as beings constituted as they were are susceptible of.” Because, in that writer’s racist opinion, Black slaves were naturally incapable of ‘free’ conduct, the name is all they aspire to, and they would continue their plantation life upon its receipt. (Schwaab and Bull 1973, 1.8)

²⁴⁰ Euripides *Iphigenia at Aulis* 928-31: καὶ τοῖς Ἀτρεΐδαις, ἦν μὲν ἠγῶνται καλῶς, / πεισόμεθ’, ὅταν δὲ μὴ καλῶς, οὐ πείσομαι. / ἀλλ’ ἐνθάδ’ ἐν Τροίᾳ τ’ ἐλευθέραν φύσιν / παρέχων.

²⁴¹ Gregory 2002, 157

²⁴² Euripides *Helen* 1629-41. This slave presents us with a stark contrast to American attitudes toward Blacks’ courage, exemplified by Thomas Dixon’s *The Clansmen*, wherein an ex-slave, Gus, attempts to arrest his former master Dr. Cameron. The doctor “stood before his former slave, his slender frame erect, his face a livid spot in its snow-white hair, his brilliant eyes flashing with fury. Gus suddenly lost control of his knees. His old master transfixed him with his eyes, and in a voice, whose tones gripped him by the throat, said: ‘How dare you?’ The gun fell from the negro’s hand, and he dropped to the floor on his face. His

Like Achilles, this slave only obeys when his master's commands fit with the slave's independent ethical standards, and he is similarly ready to die for a cause he deems noble.²⁴³

Hence Euripides 'produces similarity' among slaves and freemen by portraying slaves as having character traits nearly identical to those possessed by his tragedy's aristocratic heroes. Creusa's παιδαγωγός mirrors Menelaus in his concern for her station in the household, and the anonymous slave in *Helen* exhibits the very best qualities of the young Achilles, those instilled in the hero during his tutelage under the centaur Chiron.²⁴⁴ Other slaves in tragedy also exhibit as much intelligence and capability as the free characters. In this respect I will not dwell on the captive royalty of Euripides' plays other than to stress that these characters pointedly rebut Homer's formulation of the 'day of slavery'. Andromache especially retains her moral excellence, and in her namesake play she chastises Hermione at length for her lack of this brand of excellence. In Euripides' *Hecuba*, Polyxena retains so much bravery that her self-sacrifice permits her, with nobody speaking in opposition, to claim to die as a free woman. Hecuba herself, arguably, has some of her moral excellence robbed 'by Zeus', but the play works to essentially deconstruct Homer's proverb so as to demonstrate that the state of slavery does not itself simply degrade human beings, but rather the recurrent, crushing, emotional pressures that cruel masters impose on the slaves do so. Despite her moral lapse, Hecuba

companion uttered a yell and sprang through the door, rallying the men as he went: 'Fall back! Fall back! He's killed Gus! Shot him dead wid his eye. He's conjured him! Git de whole army quick.'" (Dixon 1905, 228)

²⁴³ Achilles repeatedly offers to fight for Iphigenia under the presumption that he would die doing so. Sc. *Iphigenia at Aulis* 970-2, 1358-69, & 1392-3. The slave in *Helen* resonates with Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom in that he is willing to die, hoping his sacrifice will open his master's eyes to his immoral conduct and 'save' him.

²⁴⁴ Euripides *Iphigenia at Aulis* 926-7

is still capable of manipulating Agamemnon and out-arguing the Thracian king Polymnestor. Slavery has not robbed her of capabilities.

The lowly slaves of tragedy too exhibit as much intelligence and competence as free characters. In Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*, Deianeira praises her nurse's prudence in offering the advice to send Hyllus to search for his father, saying, "Even out of the low-born fall goodly counsels; for, although this woman here is a slave, she has spoken a 'free' thought."²⁴⁵ In Andromache's namesake play, her maidservant solves for her mistress the 'mystery' of why her repeated attempts to have a message brought to Peleus have failed: "Surely you don't think any of these messengers paid you any mind?"²⁴⁶ What Andromache needs is a *loyal* messenger, and as Wrenhaven notes, "she proves to be the most loyal of the messengers sent to Peleus, succeeding in her task to summon him where other slaves have failed."²⁴⁷ I would add that this maidservant also proves to be exceptionally capable, courageous, and crafty in that she notes that "this is risky. Hermione is a guard of no small talent."²⁴⁸ She and Andromache agree that the penalty of failure will be death for the slave, but the maidservant bravely rises to the occasion, applies her feminine wiles to the deadly obstacles,²⁴⁹ and triumphs. Of what has Zeus robbed this slave besides her freedom?

I have been careful to say that tragedy portrays slaves with *as much* ἀρετή, σωφροσύνη, and ἀνδρεία as free characters, because they, like the free, are not always

²⁴⁵ Sophocles *Women of Trachis* 61-3: κάξ ἀγεννήτων ἄρα / μῦθοι καλῶς πίπτουσιν· ἦδε γὰρ γυνὴ / δούλη μὲν, εἴρηκεν δ' ἐλεύθερον λόγον.

²⁴⁶ Euripides *Andromache* 82: μῶν οὖν δοκεῖς σου φροντίσαι τιν' ἀγγέλων;

²⁴⁷ Wrenhaven 2012, 134. I want to note that there is nothing in the text to suggest that the other 'messengers' were slaves. It's just as likely that they were temple staff, who needn't necessarily be enslaved individuals.

²⁴⁸ Euripides *Andromache* 86: κίνδυνος· Ἑρμιόνη γὰρ οὐ μικρὸν φύλαξ.

²⁴⁹ Ibid. 85: "You will find many schemes, for you are a woman." πολλὰς ἂν εὔροις μηχανάς: γυνὴ γὰρ εἶ.

given positive characterisations or successes in the plots. Unlike Andromache's handmaiden, in *Iphigenia at Aulis* Agamemnon's slave fails to sneak his master's message to Clytemnestra. Creusa's παιδαγωγός fails to bring her murderous plot to fruition. The slave in Euripides *Hippolytus*, who convinces Phaedra to sexually proposition her son-in-law, is certainly no paragon of ἀρετή, and I am inclined to agree with duBois' assessment that "her place in the drama concerns... the inappropriateness of listening to such base arguments as hers."²⁵⁰ Nonetheless the tragedies' few instances of slaves' lapses in good conduct still 'produce similarity' in that the genre revolves around aristocratic characters going along with immoral plans such as Phaedra's slave's and around free characters committing far more egregious affronts to decency than does any slave. The instances of 'good' or 'noble' slaves vastly outnumber those of the 'bad'. Euripides is committed to using his dramas to contest the traditional polarity of citizen versus slave, and he does so by producing similarity in generally portraying slaves as so intelligent, brave, and capable as the master class. Over and above this, he stresses that everyone, free or enslaved, ought to be judged on his or her individual merits or failings, and that generalisations about entire segments of the population—slaves, bastards, or women—are entirely unreliable as guides in that assessment.

III. Female Slave Sexuality, Mistress Jealousy, and Miscegenation

Like their male counterparts, enslaved women performed a variety of economic roles alongside poor, hired citizen women.²⁵¹ They were often employed as domestic servants, charged with cleaning, spinning, nursing, and the like, but they were also set to work as

²⁵⁰ duBois 2003, 144-5. Cf. Gregory 1991, 67-70.

²⁵¹ Pomeroy 1975, 71: even "women of the upper class...supervised and—when they wished—pursued many of the same tasks deemed appropriate to slaves."

market vendors, as labourers in farm fields, and perhaps even as pot-painters.²⁵² Slave women were likely understood to be sexually available to their owners; however, as James Davidson argues, “a strong distinction seems to have been made between mistresses and maidservants.”²⁵³ After all, Athens had a highly developed prostitution industry. Solon may have even established public brothels “cheap” enough for most men.²⁵⁴ The city’s citizen males routinely bought slave concubines or contracted *hetairai*, whom bachelors and widowers might keep in their own home, but whom married men housed separately, for it was “disgraceful to keep a lover in the same house as one’s wife,” as the sadly few, extant, and indirect voices of Athenian wives attest.²⁵⁵ Because of this distinction between paramour and maidservant, arguably a concession to disgruntled wives and their relatives, overly derogatory, hyper-sexual stereotypes about domestics do not appear to have developed. Certainly they were not constructed to the extent found in the antebellum South, where planters, married or not, sexually exploited enslaved Black labourers as a matter of course, and ‘justified’ themselves by way of the impossibly

²⁵² For the domestic, market, and agricultural tasks typically regarded as “servile,” see: Demosthenes 57.45; Silver 2006, 261; Pomeroy 1975, 73. For female, perhaps enslaved, pot-painters, see this Attic red-figure vase: Vicenza, Banca Intesa, 2; ARV² 571.73; *Paralipomena* 390; *Addenda*² 261; BAD 206564.

²⁵³ Davidson 1998, 99. In antebellum America, the distinction between domestic servants, field hands, and ‘fancy maids’ seems to have been far more fluid. See Baptist 2001, Green 2011. Several ex-slave narratives will be cited over the course of this section of the chapter, and they will make it clear that planters forced all types of slave women to be sexually available to them. Edward Cohen has argued that the Athenian law against *hubris* (understood as assault), which explicitly applies to slaves as well as free persons, would have protected slave women from sexual assault, though likely more from those who did not own them (E. E. Cohen 2000, 159-67; *contra* Herman 2006, 299-300).

²⁵⁴ Lape 2004, 76-80: “No matter what his place in the social hierarchy, each citizen could afford sexual pleasure, given the plethora of inexpensive female prostitutes.” Cf. Davidson 1998, 84-5.

²⁵⁵ Davidson 1998, 98-108: “For most men these kinds of relationships were either pre-marriage or post-marriage,” because the sources are clear that women were offended at sharing their home with their husbands’ lovers or potential lovers. In Menander’s *Necklace*, a wife makes her husband forfeit a too-pretty servant girl (Fr. 402). In Lysias 1, the wife of Euphiletus, trying to cover up her own affair, angrily claims that the man wants her upstairs so he can, again, drunkenly force himself on their servant girl (Pomeroy 1975, 82-3, is convinced the accusation is true). Andocides claims that Alcibiades’ wife tried to divorce the playboy general when he introduced “*hetairai*, both slave and free” (ἑταίρας, καὶ δούλας καὶ ἐλευθέρους) into their household (4.14-5).

lascivious ‘Jezebel’ stereotype, or by way of literature that sanitised and idealised planters’ conduct.²⁵⁶

In American slave narratives, the planter’s wife is often remembered as jealous of, and threatened by, whichever of the plantation’s slaves has become the victim of her husband’s sexual appetite. For example, Harriet Jacobs wrote of her mistress: “Mrs. Flint possessed the key to her husband’s character before I was born. She might have used this knowledge to counsel and to screen the young and the innocent among her slaves; but for them she had no sympathy. They were the objects of her constant suspicion and malevolence.”²⁵⁷ Southern proslavery fiction, on the other hand, did its best to censor the idea that their pure-hearted, God-fearing, and generous-to-a-fault ‘aristocrats’ were even capable of lust, let alone infidelity. Hence the fictional women had nothing to be jealous about as far as concerns the fictional slaves.²⁵⁸

Greek tragedy was never so blindly propagandistic. The tragic poets understood well that the incorporation of a female slave into the household could be a hornets’ nest of trouble. It was something that required a delicate touch and a degree of trust within the household that few tragic heroes managed to attain. Tragedians mined the *pathos* woven into the thrusting of a helpless woman into subordination under an alien mistress, and at the same time they carved out *pathos* from the tragic, fatal errors made by loving wives, who are driven to jealousy by their husbands’ blunt admission of a new, often younger, slave woman to his bed. Both types of character are objects of pity, with whose undeserved or self-inflicted sufferings the audience is meant to identify. Aristotle’s

²⁵⁶ The ‘Jezebel’ construct and exculpatory literature will be discussed at length in Chapter 3.

²⁵⁷ Jacobs 1861, 49. The chapter is titled “The Jealous Mistress.”

²⁵⁸ Jordan-Lake 2005, 23

definition of pity is instructive, since I think it helps to counter the claim, made by scholars like Page duBois, that tragedy's enslaved women express no human "personality," but rather "stand... for the political allegory of enslavement of the city itself, and for the lessening of power experienced by aristocrats."²⁵⁹ The philosopher writes: "Let pity be some pain upon a destructive or sorrowful evil being seen to take hold of an unworthy individual, something that a man himself or his acquaintances might expect to suffer."²⁶⁰ For a tragedy's *pathos* to work, its characters as well as their flaws and actions need to be relatable and human, or "life-like" (τὸ ὁμαλόν) as Aristotle puts it in his *Poetics*.²⁶¹ Political allegory simply does not fit the bill.

Pity, therefore, is the essential element underlying the depictions of enslaved women in the extant tragedies. It is the emotion that defines the relationship between the slave and the audience, as well as between the slave and her mistress. The extent to which a mistress is portrayed as partaking in this pity illustrates her nature and consigns her characterisation either to the category of 'good' wife and mistress or to that of the 'bad' one. This is very similar to how antebellum slave narratives portrayed mistresses: the good ones pitying slaves and assuaging the institution's cruelty through kindly treatment, the bad ones showing no such forbearance and indulging in the powers of cruelty that

²⁵⁹ duBois 2003, 141. It seems to me that such a reading as duBois' assumes that the Athenians' tragedy audiences were made up predominantly of oligarchs, to whom such political allegory would be attractive. I highly doubt that this is an accurate assumption, and that those attending the Dionysiac festival by means of the city's Theoric Fund would appreciate characters meant to evoke such anti-democratic feelings. Estimates for the size of the lowest class (*thetes*) tend to peg it at "about 67 per cent of the citizen population in the early fifth century BC and about 57 per cent in 322 BC" (Wood 1988, 69; Silver 2006, 261).

²⁶⁰ Aristotle *Rhetoric* 1385b13-15: ἔστω δὴ ἔλεος λύπη τις ἐπὶ φαινομένῳ κακῷ φθαρτικῷ ἢ λυπηρῷ τοῦ ἀναξίου τυγχάνειν, ὃ κἂν αὐτὸς προσδοκῆσειεν ἂν παθεῖν ἢ τῶν αὐτοῦ τινα.

²⁶¹ Ibid. *Poetics* 1454a24ff. I follow Stephen Halliwell (1999) and S.H. Butcher (1895) in understanding τὸ ὁμαλόν to mean "life-like" rather than "like the traditional characterisation" as is understood by W.H. Fyfe (1932).

they had at their disposal.²⁶² Parts of these slave narratives often come across like advice to slaveholders about ‘good’ management, as though responding to the slave management articles published in popular Southern magazines such as *De Bows’ Review*. Solomon Northup, for instance, offered his opinion on the effective management of slaves: “Those who treated their slaves most leniently, were rewarded by the greatest amount of labour. I know it from my own experience.”²⁶³ It is in this instructive sense that I wish to interpret Greek tragedy’s depiction of war captives and of the threat their introduction to the household poses for the family.²⁶⁴ By stressing ‘bad’ masters’ and mistresses’ immoral treatment of their new slaves, and by using pity for these slaves to characterise the ‘good’ masters and mistresses, the tragedians’ plays offered the Athenian audiences instruction in how *not* to enslave. As concerns slaving ideology, the fact that these plays hinge on tragic errors denotes that there is still, indeed, some ‘proper’ way to own and purchase human beings. In contrast to Northup’s ‘how-to’ quoted above, tragedy offers relatable, and hence terrifying,²⁶⁵ ‘how-not-to’ guides to slaving.

²⁶² Consider Frederick Douglass’ contrast of Mrs. Auld with Mrs. Hamilton. “I saw what I had never seen before; it was a white face beaming with the most kindly emotions; it was the face of my new mistress, Sophia Auld...—a woman of the kindest heart and finest feelings. ...The meanest slave was put fully at ease in her presence,” and she began to teach Douglass “the A, B, C.” On the other hand, “Mrs. Hamilton used to sit in a large chair in the middle of the room, with a heavy cowskin always by her side, and scarce an hour passed during the day but was marked by the blood of one of these slaves.” Douglass notes, “His heart must be harder than stone, that could look upon these unmoved,” like Mrs. Hamilton did. (Douglass, Frederick Douglass: The Narrative and Selected Writings 1984, 44-9) On the “consoling influence of slavery,” see also Mattie Griffith’s *Autobiography of a Slave Girl*, 1857, esp. 107-15.

²⁶³ Northup [1853] 1970, 98. “It was a source of pleasure to surprise Master Ford with a greater day’s work than was required, while, under subsequent masters, there was no prompter to extra effort but the overseer’s lash.”

²⁶⁴ See p. 58, n. 181 for interpretations of tragedy as an ‘instructive’ genre.

²⁶⁵ As Aristotle claims in his *Poetics*, the *pathos* of tragedy ought to be pity and fear, the fear being that the tragic hero is like us and we are susceptible to the tragic error he commits. He writes that tragedy “through fear and pity accomplishes a *catharsis* of these same emotions. ...Pity is for the man undeserving [of his tragic fate], and fear is for the man like ourselves.” (1449b27-8; 1453a5-6)

The Clytemnestra of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, the Greeks' quintessential bad wife and mistress, briefly turns her attention to her husband's war-captive, Cassandra.

Clytemnestra, blinded by her rage, cannot see any value in the enslaved princess, but instead she jealously assumes the worst about her. In the queen's warped imagination, Cassandra is both her husband's loyal paramour (πιστή ξύνευνος) as well as the fleet's 'mast' rubber, a common whore (ναυτίλων δὲ σελμάτων ἱστοτρίβης).²⁶⁶ Here we have a portrayal of a slave that approximates the American stereotype of 'scheming Jezebel', who "was inherently wanton and lured white men in order to fulfil her insatiable sexual appetite."²⁶⁷ Aeschylus seems to criticise such a stereotype by portraying Cassandra as entirely unwilling and remarkably chaste.²⁶⁸ He also assigns these lines to his tragedy's least honest character. In this way he does not dehumanise slaves as impossibly sensual and as always inviting sexual advances, like American planters did so as to provide "a powerful rationale for the widespread sexual assaults by White men typically reported by Black slave women."²⁶⁹ As we will see much more clearly in Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*, the tragedians took an honest, realistic look at the psychological weight that slavery pressed upon households' mistresses and at how it could warp them and their relationship with their slaves, resembling closely the sometimes sympathetic views expressed in American slave narratives about the corrupting influence of the 'peculiar institution' on slaveholders.

²⁶⁶ Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1442-3

²⁶⁷ Altink 2005, 279; Collins 2002, 81-4; D. G. White 1985, 29-46

²⁶⁸ Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 1202-8. Paula Debnar argues at length that Aeschylus, unlike Euripides in his *Hecuba*, presents a virginal Cassandra, whose virginity ties into the trilogy's themes of transitions between stages of life: maidenhood to marriage, boyhood to manhood, etc. (Debnar 2010, 132-3)

²⁶⁹ Collins 2002, 81

Deianeira of Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* is presented at the beginning of the play as both a 'good' wife and a 'good' mistress. Aeschylus' Clytemnestra pretended to be concerned about Agamemnon over the course of his ten year absence, but Deianeira truly does worry about Heracles. The play's chorus sings about how she "nourishes an obsessive fear for her husband's journey, wasting away on her heavy-hearted, widowed bed, expecting the most miserable, wicked destiny."²⁷⁰ Soon enough Heracles' lackey, the herald Lichas, enters the scene, assures Deianeira of her husband's safety, and presents her with the captive women that Heracles has sent back after his sacking of Oechalia. Before Deianeira learns that Heracles' motivation for the capture was *eros* directed at the princess Iole, instead of revenge as Lichas tells the story, she takes interest in the household's new slaves and reacts as a 'good' mistress at the sight of their painful status transition from free to enslaved. Her first words about them are: "These women, by the gods, who are they and from where do they come? For, I pity them, unless their sufferings deceive me."²⁷¹ Her attention returns to the captives shortly after an expository speech by Lichas, and again Deianeira's dialogue is dominated by genuine sympathy. In fact, here Sophocles hits upon the twin Aristotelian precepts of catharsis: pity and fear. Deianeira pities Iole for her undeserved fate, and fears that she and her children might fall into similar ruin. She empathises with Iole just as the audience will empathise with Deianeira later in the play.²⁷² Her speech:

²⁷⁰ Sophocles *Women of Trachis* 108-11: εὐμναστον ἀνδρὸς δεῖμα τρέφουσας ὁδοῦ / ἐνθυμίαις εὐναῖς ἀναν- / δρώτοισι τρύχεσθαι, κακὰν / δύστανον ἐλπίζουσας αἴσαν.

²⁷¹ Ibid. *Women of Trachis* 242-3: αὗται δέ, πρὸς θεῶν, τοῦ ποτ' εἰσὶ καὶ τίνες; / οἰκτραὶ γάρ, εἰ μὴ ξυμφοραὶ κλέπτουσί με.

²⁷² As Christina Kraus has argued persuasively, Deianeira's empathy for Iole stems from the parallels that she implicitly draws between her own meeting with an *eros*-stricken Heracles and Iole's meeting, as well as between her own treatment by Heracles, and Iole's treatment. (Kraus 1991, 85-6)

ἔμοι γὰρ οἴκτος δεινὸς εἰσέβη, φίλαι,
 ταύτας ὀρώσῃ δυσπότητους ἐπὶ ξένης
 χώρας ἀοίκους ἀπάτοράς τ' ἄλωμένας,
 αἱ πρὶν μὲν ἦσαν ἐξ ἐλευθέρων ἴσως
 ἀνδρῶν, τανῦν δὲ δοῦλον ἴσχουσιν βίον.
 ὦ Ζεῦ τροπαῖε, μή ποτ' εἰσίδοιμί σε
 πρὸς τοῦμὸν οὔτω σπέρμα χωρήσαντά ποι,
 μηδ', εἴ τι δράσεις, τῆσδέ γε ζώσης ἔτι.
 οὔτως ἐγὼ δέδοικα τάσδ' ὀρωμένη.
 ὦ δυστάλαινα, τίς ποτ' εἶ νεανίδων;
 ἄνανδρος ἢ τεκνοῦσσα; πρὸς μὲν γὰρ φύσιν
 πάντων ἄπειρος τῶνδε, γενναία δέ τις.
 ... νιν τῶνδε πλεῖστον ὄκτισα
 βλέπουσ', ὅσῳ περ καὶ φρονεῖν οἶδεν μόνη.

A terrible pity came upon me, friends,
 when I saw these ill-starred women in a foreign
 land, homeless, fatherless, outcasts,
 who perhaps were once of free parents,
 but now possess a slave life.
 O overturning Zeus! May I never see you
 advance thus against my children,
 or, if you do, may I not still be alive!
 So I have feared upon seeing these women.
 Oh most downtrodden woman! Which maiden are you?
 Are you a mother or without husband? For, an ignorance
 of these matters is in your nature. You must be a noble.
 ... I pitied her most of all when I spotted her,
 by how far she alone knew to mind her situation.²⁷³

Even Lichas, who lies through his teeth about not knowing Iole's identity, sounds off along sympathetic, empathetic lines. "She, labouring under the weight of her ruin, melts into tears and melancholy ever since she left her wind-swept fatherland," he says. "Indeed, fate has been cruel to her, and she warrants our forbearance."²⁷⁴ Deianeira agrees and says that Iole can go inside however she pleases, "lest she seize some other pain from me in addition to her present woes."²⁷⁵ Deianeira, the 'good' mistress, treats

²⁷³ Sophocles *Women of Trachis* 298-313

²⁷⁴ Ibid. *Women of Trachis* 325-8: ἄλλ' αἰὲν ὠδίνουσα συμφορᾶς βάρος / δακρυρροεῖ δύστηνος, ἐξ ὅτου πάτρην / δῆνεμον λέλοιπεν: ἡ δέ τοι τύχη / κακὴ μὲν αὐτῆ γ', ἀλλὰ συγγνώμην ἔχει.

²⁷⁵ Ibid. *Women of Trachis* 330-1: μηδὲ πρὸς κακοῖς / τοῖς οὔσιν ἄλλην πρὸς γ' ἔμοῦ λύπην λάβη.

her new slaves with respect and sympathy, the way in which she would most likely succeed in incorporating the slaves into her household and inculcating an eventual loyalty.

Unlike Clytemnestra, who came to her jealous assumptions of her own accord, Deianeira suspects no reason for jealousy, and even thinks that the girl seems “ignorant” of sexual matters. This changes when a messenger reveals Lichas’ lies, telling her that Heracles sent Iole home, “not as a slave,” but as a wife (δάμαρτα).²⁷⁶ Yet this ‘good’ wife and mistress maintains her composure. “You are not speaking to a wicked woman,” she declares, “or to someone who has no understanding of men, that they are not disposed to enjoy the same things forever.”²⁷⁷ She claims it would be madness to blame Heracles and Iole for falling under the influence of Eros, “for he rules even over the gods.”²⁷⁸ Suddenly, Deianeira is imagining Iole as a willing participant in her relationship with Heracles, and yet even when this jealous thought creeps over her, she maintains her ‘good’ mistress character:

οὐχὶ χᾶτέρας
 πλείστας ἀνὴρ εἷς Ἡρακλῆς ἔγημε δῆ;
 κοῦπω τις αὐτῶν ἔκ γ’ ἐμοῦ λόγον κακὸν
 ἠνέγκατ’ οὐδ’ ὄνειδος· ἦδε τ’ οὐδ’ ἂν εἰ
 κάρτ’ ἐντακείη τῷ φιλεῖν, ἐπεὶ σφ’ ἐγὼ
 ὄκτιρα δὴ μάλιστα προσβλέψασ’, ὅτι
 τὸ κάλλος αὐτῆς τὸν βίον διώλεσεν,
 καὶ γῆν πατρώαν οὐχ ἔκοῦσα δῦσμορος
 ἔπερσε κάδούλωσεν.

Has not Heracles, one man, taken to bed more women than
 other men? Never yet has one of them borne an evil word
 or censure from me. She will not, even if

²⁷⁶ Ibid. *Women of Trachis* 367: οὐδ’ ὥστε δούλην.

²⁷⁷ Ibid. *Women of Trachis* 438-40: οὐ γὰρ γυναικὶ τοὺς λόγους ἐρεῖς κακῆ, / οὐδ’ ἦτις οὐ κάτοιδε τάνθρώπων, ὅτι / χαίρειν πέφυκεν οὐχὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἀεί.

²⁷⁸ Ibid. *Women of Trachis* 443: οὗτος γὰρ ἄρχει καὶ θεῶν.

she sinks into loving him, since I pitied
 her most of all upon seeing that
 her beauty destroyed her life,
 and, ill-fated, she unwillingly sacked and enslaved
 her fatherland.²⁷⁹

Sophocles inflates Deianeira's moral excellence and her 'good' mistress status by having her not go back on these words. This is not to say that she is not angry, or that she is not jealous. Soon after the above words, she turns to the chorus for consolation, complaining that "the things with which Heracles... repays me, who kept his house for so long a time," are to live together with his mistress and share her marriage. "What woman could stand this?"²⁸⁰ She fears displacement, in that "Heracles will be called my husband, but that younger woman's *man*."²⁸¹ Yet she never blames the victim. She does not demonise the slave, the object of her husband's lust. Unlike Clytemnestra or the crazed plantation mistresses such as Mrs. Epps in Northup's narrative, she proclaims that "it is not right to be angry,"²⁸² and concocts a plan to win back her husband's affection rather than murder or maim the attractive slave. As much as Deianeira's role as wife in a slaveholding and mismanaged household has corrupted the high, disinterested moral standards that she proclaims for herself in front of Lichas and the messenger—and in this respect I am reminded of Mrs. Auld in Frederick Douglass' narrative²⁸³—she never consciously lashes out at anyone.²⁸⁴ She is the epitome of the 'good', self-controlled Greek woman.

²⁷⁹ Ibid. *Women of Trachis* 459-67.

²⁸⁰ Ibid. *Women of Trachis* 540-2: τοιάδ' Ἡρακλῆς, / ὁ πιστὸς ἡμῖν κάγαθὸς καλούμενος, / οἰκούρι' ἀντέπεμψε τοῦ μακροῦ χρόνου. 545-6: τὸ δ' αὖ ζυνοικεῖν τῆδ' ὁμοῦ τίς ἂν γυνή / δύναιτο, κοινωνοῦσα τῶν αὐτῶν γάμων;

²⁸¹ Ibid. *Women of Trachis* 550-1: πόσις μὲν Ἡρακλῆς / ἐμὸς καλῆται, τῆς νεωτέρας δ' ἀνήρ. duBois 2003, 142.

²⁸² Ibid. *Women of Trachis* 552: οὐ γάρ, ὥσπερ εἶπον, ὀργαίνειν καλὸν.

²⁸³ Douglass laments how slavery warped his once dear mistress: "Slavery proved as injurious to her as it did to me. When I went there, she was a pious, warm, and tender-hearted woman. There was no sorrow or suffering for which she had not a tear. She had bread for the hungry, clothes for the naked, and comfort for

This reflects on the sort of sexual threat that Sophocles has presented female slaves to be. The threat is private, directed at the household and the corruption of an otherwise ‘good wife’,²⁸⁵ which stands in stark contrast to how proslavery antebellum authors blew sexual liaisons with female slaves into a public threat to the very fabric of their society. “They threatened the social order because they led to ‘spurious offspring’,” who were manumitted in the United States with more regularity than Black-bred slaves and so “upset the delicate balance of power... which was increasingly based on skin colour.”²⁸⁶ Fear of miscegenation, of children that could blur the ever-sharpening Colour Line, distinguishes the sexual threat thought to be posed by female slaves in the antebellum South from that which is ascertainable in the ancient Greek sources. Sophocles’ *Women of Trachis* is an ideal text to stress this difference. Not only is there no fear whatsoever expressed about the mixing of free and enslaved bloodlines, Heracles’ dying wish, which he makes his son Hyllus swear to fulfill, is that Hyllus and Iole marry and perpetuate the Heraclid line.²⁸⁷ Admittedly, Iole had been a princess and retains some of her ‘aristocratic’ value in this play, but many slaves in the Atlantic came from similar positions of privilege only to have that past effectively erased in America’s ‘racialised

every mourner that came within her reach. Slavery soon proved its ability to divest her of these heavenly qualities. Under its influence, the tender heart became stone, and the lamblike disposition gave way to one of tiger-like fierceness.” (Douglass, Frederick Douglass: The Narrative and Selected Writings 1984, 50)

²⁸⁴ The contrast with Mrs. Epp’s violent lashing-outs is abundantly clear: “Nothing delighted the mistress so much as to see [Patsey] suffer, and more than once, when Epps had refused to sell her, has she tempted me with bribes to put her secretly to death... If [Patsey] was not watchful when about her cabin, or when walking in the yard, a billet of wood, or a broken bottle perhaps, hurled from her mistress’ hand, would smite her unexpectedly in the face.” (Northup [1853] 1970, 189)

²⁸⁵ duBois 2003, 142-3

²⁸⁶ Altink 2005, 274

²⁸⁷ Pozzi 1999, 36-7

social system' and racial slavery.²⁸⁸ The divergence in attitudes toward miscegenation remains acute.

Before leaving Sophocles, I wish to briefly highlight how his play is also a 'how-not-to' guide to slaving. A tragic error of the slave-owner, Heracles, is that he acquires and bluntly introduces a beautiful, young, once-noble slave into their household without the slightest thought as to how it would affect the balance of trust between the husband and his long-estranged wife. The hero's inability to appropriately govern his household causes his wife to act in unforeseen and fatal ways. A 'good' master would know better than to parade an enslaved sexual rival in front of his wife, which Sophocles makes clear by how Lichas lies for the hero.²⁸⁹ Lichas claims that Heracles never asked him to do so, but the herald knew that more tact was necessary, otherwise he "would pain her heart with his words."²⁹⁰ It should be remembered that Deianeira, living in exile because of Heracles, has no support network to help her grapple with the change to her household except for the foreign chorus and an extremely minor nurse character. Perhaps the plot worked out less violently had Heracles only accompanied his captives home personally. Maybe he would have been able to smooth over the changes to the household hierarchy wrought by the introduction of Iole and the other slaves. Perhaps he would have been convinced by his wife not to replace her with the captive princess, but this is tragedy, and the heroes must make their mistakes.

²⁸⁸ For example, 'Little' Ephraim Robin John and Ancona Robin Robin John were two young men enslaved in 1767, once "members of one of the ruling families of Old Calabar." (Sparks 2002, 555) See also: Gallaudet, *A Statement with Regard to the Moorish Prince, Abduhl Rahhahman*, 1828.

²⁸⁹ Sc. Lysias (Demosthenes 59.22; Davidson 1998, 99). Even 'bad', promiscuous masters know better in antebellum slave narratives. For example, Harriet Jacobs wrote that Mrs. Flint "watched her husband with unceasing vigilance; but he was well practised in means to evade it. What he could not find opportunity to say in words he manifested in signs." (Jacobs 1861, 49)

²⁹⁰ Sophocles *Women of Trachis* 481-2: τὸ σὸν / ...στέρνων ἀλγύνοιμι τοῖσδε τοῖς λόγοις.

Finally, Euripides' presentation of female slaves as a sexual threat to the household will be examined. The best text for this is the *Andromache*, in which its namesake captive poses a great deal of threat to her master Neoptolemus' new wife Hermione. Euripides' tackling of the thorny issue of female captives differs from those of Aeschylus and Sophocles in that the *Andromache* does not focus on the "liminal" time of transition between free and enslaved status.²⁹¹ Andromache, Hector's Trojan princess, has been a slave for some time now. She lives in her master's house in Thessaly, and she has borne him a son. Hermione, as of yet unable to bear children, seethes with jealousy and feels that Andromache's presence in the house has put her marriage on its last legs. First, Andromache's side of the story:

ἐπεὶ δὲ τὴν Λάκαιναν Ἑρμιόνην γαμεῖ
 τοῦμόν παρῶσας δεσπότης δοῦλον λέχος,
 κακοῖς πρὸς αὐτῆς σχετλίοις ἐλαύνομαι.
 λέγει γὰρ ὡς νιν φαρμάκοις κεκρυμμένοις
 τίθημι ἄπαιδα καὶ πόσει μισουμένην,
 αὐτῇ δὲ ναίειν οἶκον ἀντ' αὐτῆς θέλω
 τόνδ', ἐκβαλοῦσα λέκτρα τὰ κείνης βία·
 ἀγὼ τὸ πρῶτον οὐχ ἔκοῦσ' ἐδεξάμην,
 νῦν δ' ἐκλέλοιπα· Ζεὺς τὰδ' εἰδείη μέγας,
 ὡς οὐχ ἔκοῦσα τῷδ' ἐκοινώθην λέχει.
 ἀλλ' οὔ σφε πείθω, βούλεται δέ με κτανεῖν.

Since [Neoptolemus] married the Laconian Hermione,
 the master spurning my bed, his slave's,
 I have been hounded by unflinching evils at her hands.
 For she says that with secret potions I make
 her childless and an object of hate for her husband,
 that I wish to live in her house in her stead,
 ousting her from his bed by force.
 I, from the outset, was received into it against my will,
 and may I now abandon it! May mighty Zeus acknowledge
 that I unwillingly shared in this bed,

²⁹¹ duBois 2003, 148

since I cannot convince her, and she wishes to murder
me.²⁹²

This passage echoed in my mind as I read the uncannily similar accounts of the jealousy that Harriet Jacobs' and Solomon Northup's mistresses displayed toward the enslaved victims of their husbands' sexual predations.²⁹³ Euripides is a master of psychological realism. Hermione's side of the story differs little from Andromache's. She threatens the Trojan woman with death, accuses her of trying to displace the household's wife, and she refuses to believe that the Trojan was unwilling. Instead, as with Aeschylus' Clytemnestra, Hermione insists that Andromache is *naturally* too licentious to have needed to be coerced into sex. She rages: "You have come into such idiocy, you wretch, that you dare to sleep with the child of the father who slew your husband, and to bear a child for the murderers of your family! Of such a sort is the whole barbarian family."²⁹⁴ In Hermione's imagination, Andromache becomes a temptress, a 'scheming Jezebel'.

Yet Euripides' play works hard to present Hermione's opinions as mad ravings, the sorts of thoughts at complete odds with those which typify a 'good', self-controlled wife. This is made clear by the way in which Andromache contrasts herself with Hermione, the 'good' wife, self-controlled and self-sacrificing, versus the 'bad', too impassioned and self-interested:

²⁹² Euripides *Andromache* 29-39

²⁹³ Jacobs swore to God, her hand resting on a bible, that she was telling Mrs. Flint a true and complete account of Mr. Flint's sexual coercions, when the mistress demanded, "Tell me all that has passed between your master and you." Yet in the following nights, the unconvinced Flint stalked Jacobs, hoping to catch her out on a lie. "She spent many a sleepless night to watch over me. Sometimes I woke up, and found her bending over me. At other times she whispered in my ear, as though it was her husband who was speaking to me, and listened to hear what I would answer. ...At last, I began to be fearful for my life. It has been often threatened; and you can imagine, better than I can describe, what an unpleasant sensation it must produce to wake up in the dead of night and find a jealous woman bending over you." (Jacobs 1861, 52-3) On Mrs. Epps' explicit desire to murder Patsy in Northup's narrative, see, in this chapter, p. 87, n. 284.

²⁹⁴ Euripides *Andromache* 170-3: ἐς τοῦτο δ' ἤκεις ἀμαθίας, δύστηνε σύ, / ἢ παιδί πατρός ὃς σὸν ὤλεσεν πόσιν / τολμᾶς ξυνεύδειν καὶ τέκν' ἀθηνῶν πάρα / τίκτειν. τοιοῦτον πᾶν τὸ βάρβαρον γένος.

χρὴ γὰρ γυναῖκα, κὰν κακῶ πόσει δοθῆ,
 στέργειν ἄμιλλάν τ' οὐκ ἔχειν φρονήματος...
 ὦ φίλαθ' Ἔκτορ, ἀλλ' ἐγὼ τὴν σὴν χάριν
 σοὶ καὶ ξυνήρων, εἴ τί σε σφάλλοι Κύπρις,
 καὶ μαστὸν ἤδη πολλάκις νόθοισι σοῖς
 ἐπέσχον, ἵνα σοι μηδὲν ἐνδοίην πικρόν.
 καὶ ταῦτα δρῶσα τῇ ἀρετῇ προσηγόμεν
 πόσιν· σὺ δ' οὐδὲ ῥανίδ' ὑπαιθρίας δρόσου
 τῶ σῶ προσίζειν ἀνδρὶ δειμαίνουσ' ἔῤα.

It is right for a woman, even if given to a wicked husband,
 to be loving and not to hold a contest of pride...
 O dearest Hector! I shared your pleasure
 with you, if Aphrodite sent you reeling,
 and often I breastfed your bastard children,
 so I would show you no bitterness.
 In doing this, I drew myself to excellence
 in my husband's eyes; but you won't let your man
 sit out in the open air for fear of a drop of rain.²⁹⁵

As vomit-inducing as modern feminists might find Andromache's deference to her husband's sexual appetites, ancient Greek men did not have a Judeo-Christian view of marital chastity. Rather, as Apollodorus stated in his speech against Neaira, "We have *hetairai* for the sake of pleasure, concubines (*pallakai*) for the daily needs of the body, and wives for legitimate child making and so as to have a loyal guard of the home."²⁹⁶ Euripides' Andromache rises above her sexual rivals in her husband's eyes by not entertaining any jealousy toward them, and by acting as an ideal 'guard of the home'. Furthermore, there is no extant tradition that Hector ever kept one of his consorts.²⁹⁷ This should guide the interpretation of just what sort of threat Euripides considers the

²⁹⁵ Euripides *Andromache* 213-4; 220-8. Kelly Wrenhaven notes this contrast is conventional: "Andromache is traditionally portrayed as an ideal wife who knows her place, while Hermione, as the daughter of Helen, famously does not." (Wrenhaven 2012, 131) Cf. duBois 2003, 148.

²⁹⁶ Demosthenes 59.122: τὰς μὲν γὰρ ἑταίρας ἡδονῆς ἕνεκ' ἔχομεν, τὰς δὲ παλλακὰς τῆς καθ' ἡμέραν θεραπείας τοῦ σώματος, τὰς δὲ γυναῖκας τοῦ παιδοποιεῖσθαι γνησίως καὶ τῶν ἐνδον φύλακα πιστὴν ἔχειν.

²⁹⁷ Stevens 1971, 121-2. Obviously, in the Homeric tradition, Hector's son is murdered by Neoptolemus, but a few authors liked to play loose with Homeric stories, and so we hear a few vague references to Scamandrius returning to Troy, either alone or with unnamed Ἐκτορίδα. (Dionysius of Halicarnassus 1.47.5, Strabo 13.1.52 & 14.5.29)

incorporation of war-captives into a household to be. The situation in which a wife is driven to catastrophic jealousy—even if she is prone to excessive passion, like Hermione—is when the household’s master does not keep his ‘pleasure’ and ‘daily needs’ separate from his marriage-bed. Blame does not fall onto a hyper-sexualised or a scheming-by-nature slave, at least not when reliable characters speak. As a number of characters in the *Andromache* say, and here the chorus, “Never will I praise a doubled marriage-bed for mortals, nor two-mothered children. It spells discord and wicked pains for the household. Let my husband love, in marriage, my one, unshared bed.”²⁹⁸ Hence, without condoning Hermione’s destructive jealousy, the play nevertheless sets up Neoptolemus as the cause of the discord within his household for his inability to properly distinguish his relationship (κοινωνία) as husband to his wife from that as master to his slave.²⁹⁹ This discord results, though less directly than in Sophocles’ *Women of Trachis*, in his murder. Thus, this play too presents a ‘how-not-to’ guide to slaving, one sensitive and sympathetic to the realistic emotional needs of both slave and mistress.

Kelly Wrenhaven would be quick to stress that “we must not read these depictions as sympathy for all slaves,” since “we are reminded repeatedly in these plays that the Trojan war captives are not just any slaves.” They are from the nobility, and they “suffer all the more because, in the Greek mind, it is the lofty who were thought to fall hardest when disaster hits.”³⁰⁰ This last point is beyond contention. The lofty indeed fall harder, and that is why they are chosen as the subjects of tragedy—*pathos* is easier to procure in this

²⁹⁸ Euripides *Andromache* 465-70: οὐδέποτε δίδυμα λέκτρ’ ἐπαινέσω βροτῶν / οὐδ’ ἀμφιμάτορας κόρους, / ἔριν μελάθρων δυσμενεῖς τε λύπας. / μίαν μοι στεργέτω πόσις γάμοις / ἀκοινώ- / νητον ἄμῶς εὐνάν. Cf. 177-80, 120-5.

²⁹⁹ That these relationships (κοινωνία) ought to be different in nature is a concept discussed at length in Aristotle’s *Politics* 1252a ff.

³⁰⁰ Wrenhaven 2012, 130-5

way. This does not, however, mean that we ‘must’ not read the depictions as universally sympathetic. When Sophocles’ Deianeira spots her husbands’ captives for the first time, we see clearly that her sympathy extends to all of the captive women, not just Iole, even if the princess elicits the most pity. Moreover, as I have already argued, tragedy hinges on the ability of the audience to identify and empathise with the characters’ errors, and in this Sophocles play the figure with whom the audience is meant to most closely identify is Deianeira.³⁰¹ The average Athenian was not enslaving foreign princesses. So when he read his own or their wives’ pity and jealousy into Deianeira’s character, which is essential to the *pathos* of the play, he was thinking of his own or his wife’s relationship with their common slaves. The same is true of Euripides’ *Andromache*. When the audience read their own or their rich neighbours’ wives’ jealousy into the character of Hermione, they again thought of Athenian domestic spaces and the strained relationships between these real wives and their ordinary slaves. The tragedians’ *pathos* was derived from realism, which I believe has been proven by how closely analogous these three tragedies are to antebellum slave autobiographies in their portrayal of the emotional dynamics stringing together master, mistress, and slave.

One final note about the *Andromache*’s presentation of ‘miscegenation’ is in order. As with the marriage of Sophocles’ Hyllus and Iole, which propagated Heracles’ line without issue, *Andromache*’s child with Neoptolemus is unproblematic, even though, unlike the Greek Iole, the Trojan woman’s Phrygian origin is repeatedly stressed. In fact, Euripides criticises the fear of interbreeding with foreigners, even this ethnicity which

³⁰¹ Scott 1995, 18.

was typically enslaved at Athens, by putting it in the mouth of the cowardly, vainglorious Menelaus. The Spartan spits these chauvinistic words at Peleus:

ἦν παῖς μὲν ἡμῆ μὴ τέκη, ταύτης δ' ἄπο
 βλάστωσι παῖδες, τῆσδε γῆς Φθιώτιδος
 στήσεις τυράννους, βάρβαροι δ' ὄντες γένος
 Ἑλλησιν ἄρξουσ'; εἴτ' ἐγὼ μὲν οὐ φρονῶ
 μισῶν τὰ μὴ δίκαια, σοὶ δ' ἔνεστι νοῦς;

If my daughter does not birth a child, but children come from Andromache, will you establish them as tyrants of the land of Phthia, and allow those who are barbarians by birth rule Greeks? Am *I* not thinking straight, hating unjust things? Are you in your right mind?³⁰²

The short answer is yes. Peleus chastises the Spartan for his feelings of superiority and promises to raise the boy, Molossus, “in Phthia as a great enemy to the Spartans.”³⁰³ The sensible Peleus dismisses as ridiculous Menelaus’ fear of miscegenation and the threat it might pose to the social order. It should be noted that this case of ‘miscegenation’ was actually used to *establish* a social order in that the monarchs in Epirus claimed descent from precisely this Greek-Phrygian boy and the other children Andromache had by Neoptolemus.³⁰⁴ It is through this lineage, perhaps, that Alexander the Great’s obsession with Achilles sprang, since he could rightfully claim a part in the great hero’s Molossian line by way of his mother Olympias. Euripides not only displays nothing like the modern American hysteria over ‘race-mixing’, but portrays such a fear as ludicrous.

The tragedians do not shy away from the uncomfortable realities of their time’s slavery. It is where they find the themes they need to bring their audiences to *catharsis*. Unlike American proslavery fiction and drama, which actively censor the ways that the

³⁰² Euripides *Andromache* 663-7

³⁰³ Ibid. 723-4: ἐν Φθίᾳ σ' ἐγὼ / θρέψω μέγαν τοῖσδ' ἐχθρόν

³⁰⁴ Pausanias *Description of Greece* 1.11.1-2

'peculiar institution' perverts human souls, Greek tragedy looks honestly into the face of slavery's corruptive power. The poets know well that slavery weighs heavily on all involved. In their plays, the temptations of slavery allow great heroes to forget their rightful place as husband to one wife, as master, not lover, to his slaves, and so the men lose sight of how to properly order a household. This mismanagement corrupts even the ideal wife, like Deianeira, into blinding jealousy. Extended exposure to unchecked power over others warps mistresses' minds, like Hermione's, and steals from them the ability to empathise with their slaves and recognise the truth and reason in their words. Cast into subordination under these unfeeling and uncaring mistresses, captive women suffer death or the realistic and prolonged anxiety that their mistress would soon follow through on her death threats. Pity abounds in the tragedies for both the corrupted mistresses and the helpless slaves.

This does not mean that tragedy is abolitionist to any significant degree. Slavery does not *cause* the tragedies' miseries. It offers choices that will lead to them. Clytemnestra never needed to kill Cassandra, nor was Hermione constrained by the system into attempting Andromache's murder. Deianeira did not have to indulge her jealousy. Under the emotional burden of slavery, however, tragic heroes and heroines crumple and make catastrophically wrong choices. In this way, tragedy implies that there are 'right' choices and acceptable instances of slavery, while at the same time it shies away from becoming mere slaveholder propaganda. Unlike American proslavery novels, stage-plays, and songs, all of which sanitise the aspects of slavery that reflected poorly on the slaveholder class' morality, Greek tragedy neither hides these aspects nor stereotypes the slaves so as to 'justify' the slaveholder class' immoral conduct. Slave women are not turned into

hyper-sexualised ‘Jezebels’ to justify their own rape. They are as realistic as tragedy can manage. Tragedy portrays the catastrophic errors of slaveholding men and women as terrifyingly *normal*, and the victims of these errors as piteous, so that the audience members would reflect on their own slaving practices and their own household management. By tragic examples, audience members were forced to think through the moral quagmire that is slaving, and they were instructed on how *not* to slave.

Conclusion

Tragedy strongly advocates against the use of stereotypes to assess people’s worth. This is especially true for slaves. Slave characters’ actions are indistinguishable from those of free characters, their advice needs to be as carefully considered as that of the free, and sententious statements regularly declare that slaves are as capable of moral rectitude, intelligence, and bravery as any free person. When masters and mistresses do indulge in stereotypes about slaves, the onstage consequences are invariably disastrous to their households. While tragic slaves are unfailingly loyal to their masters, that loyalty is never presented as a natural quality of the slave but rather as the result of masters treating them as individuals and considering them to be members of the family. The dehumanising stereotypes familiar from American pro-slavery literature are absent or criticised by Greek tragedy. The real, dehumanising effect of slavery on the enslaved, however, is spotlighted right alongside its moral perversion of masters and mistresses, in a manner eerily reminiscent of non-fiction antebellum slave narratives. Tragedy was no mere propaganda machine for slaveholders. It offered instructive glimpses at the people affected by slavery, aiming not just to make “the men in their cities better,” but also to make them better-informed and more mindful slavers. This mindfulness regarding

slavery, however, is not directed at prodding the Athenians toward abolition. Rather, by staging instances of ‘slaving gone wrong’, the tragedians imply that there is an ideal, even victimless model of slavery in which masters are benevolent and slaves are cared for sufficiently. Where American slavery idealists posited that a perfect, paternalistic slave system must be based upon ‘racial knowledge’, the Greek tragedians implied that such a system must be based on an understanding of common human characteristics.

Chapter 3: America

As Winthrop Jordan and Katherine Howlett Hayes, among a host of other American historians, so aptly describe, the racialization of American slavery was a process that occurred over the 17th and 18th centuries as the result of elites' impositions of oppressive and exploitative institutional arrangements which were themselves motivated by economic logic but justified *post hoc* by religious and eventually racial rationalisations and propaganda. Over time much of the colonial population gradually “forgot” the originally economic motivations for the oppressive institutions, and so the social structure and justificatory representations “came to be viewed as ‘natural’.”³⁰⁵

American White supremacy evolved as the American social context was transformed by political and economic actors. It was not just an intellectual movement, but an ideology meant to justify wildly inegalitarian and exploitative social structures. Historian Idu A. Newby elegantly explains this with respect to segregationist ideology, though he notes that his explanation is equally true of the earlier proslavery ideology: the ideologues “often tailor their thinking to immediate needs without regard to larger philosophical considerations. [The] ideology was never systematized, its paradoxes never resolved... It was a jerry-built defense of southern race policies as those policies developed... a makeshift of whim and whimsy, truth, half-truth, and untruth, opportunism and necessity, it alternately rationalizes violence, intimidation, and

³⁰⁵ Hayes 2013, 5-16, esp. 7-8 on “forgetting;” Jordan 1968, 91-3, 179-87; Lape 2012, 54-6; Elkins 1976, 61, 242; Jones 1999, 36-7; Jones 1998, 82-3: “By the time of the Revolution, white elites... had developed a theory of black inferiority that sought to justify the relegation of Africans and their descendents to lifelong menial toil. ...Because slaves were forced to work at a gruelling pace, often under dangerous conditions, whites concluded that, in the words of one Virginia planter, black people in general “are by nature cut out for hard labour and fatigue...”

paternalism.”³⁰⁶ Racist ideologues, in accordance with their immediate political or social aims, readily claimed that the racial nature of Black folk was at once industrious or lazy, docile or insurrectionary, loyal or shiftless, chaste and Christianised or hyper-sexual and heathen. A “pattern of paradox and inconsistency is the cardinal feature” of White supremacist ideology, as Newby explains, because it needed only to be convincing enough to persuade a majority of Whites to leave in place or institute the societal structures that the ruling elites deemed beneficial or necessary to their political, social, and economic agendas.³⁰⁷

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that anti-Black racial stereotypes were developed as justificatory propaganda for the Southern ‘peculiar institution’ and the later Jim Crow segregation system. Because this “racialised social system” was radically different from the ancient Greek, especially Athenian, democratic one, White Americans and ancient Greeks produced similarly divergent stereotypes concerning slaves, freedmen, and free people of the ethnicities most commonly tapped for slavery. As with the previous chapters, this one is structured around the comparative stereotype themes of criminality, loyalty, fitness for citizenship, and laziness. Each has been structured so as to demonstrate the evolution of the racial stereotypes in step with changes in social structure.

The reason for the inclusion in this study of the era after American chattel slavery’s official abolishment is that White Americans’ essentialist anti-Black propaganda pushed their conception of supremacy beyond slaves to all Black folk. So when the ‘peculiar institution’ was abolished, the “racialised social system” continued to thrive, after a brief

³⁰⁶ Newby 1968, 12-14

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

but significant disruption by Reconstruction, through new or simply repackaged means of racial oppression. As W.E.B. DuBois described the transition between racial slavery and the Jim Crow caste system, “The slave went free; stood a brief moment in the sun; then moved back again toward slavery. The whole weight of America was thrown to color caste. ...A new slavery arose. ...Democracy died save in the hearts of black folk.”³⁰⁸ Jim Crow anti-Black stereotypes are profitable for this comparative study, because there is a substantial continuity in the White supremacist ideology of the antebellum and Jim Crow periods. This continuity helps to elucidate that “racism” is not the “logical consequence of the slave-outsider equation,” as Moses Finley would have it, but rather a specific set of elite-imposed social practices, structures, and justificatory propaganda, which could flourish without the legal categories of ‘slave’ and ‘free’, and which generally cannot be found in the evidence for classical Athens.

A note on the primary sources for the stereotypes discussed in this chapter is in order. As per my contention that anti-Black racial stereotypes were justificatory propaganda, I have focussed on mediums that were mostly written by slaveholders and that were widely available to those living in contact with slavery, just as Comedy and Tragedy were the most widely viewed slaveholder-authored mediums during the Classical era. Novels, periodical literature, travelogues of Africa and the South, plantation management treatises, as well as newspaper editorials take pride of place for their wide distribution in the South. Less referenced but still critical sources are political speeches, racial theorists’ treatises, and the black-face minstrel show, which was a staple more of the North than the South, where the shows were often banned or chased out of town as slavery became a

³⁰⁸ Du Bois 1935, 30

more and more controversial subject in the mid-1800s.³⁰⁹ Stage plays are rarely referenced, because these, even more so than the minstrel shows, were a mainstay of Northern culture, as Southern novelists were so keen on pointing out.³¹⁰

I. Fitness for Citizenship: Dehumanisation, “Slavery Forever!”

It should come as no surprise that White Americans claimed Black Americans to be unfit for citizen rights and unqualified to vote. More surprising, perhaps, is that after the American Revolution almost every state actually allowed free Black men to vote, but as proslavery sentiment ramped up in the early 19th century, more and more states disenfranchised all Black individuals. Slowly but surely the United States transformed into a definitively ‘White republic’, and after the Civil War White supremacists in the South waged war and terrorism to overthrow Reconstruction and again disenfranchise Black citizens. Unlike in the ancient Greek democracies, where citizens were ideologically prepared to absorb ex-slaves into the citizenry, the White Americans spearheading Black disenfranchisement developed justificatory and exculpating stereotypes about Black individuals’ unfitness for citizenship. Supremacists claimed that they were too stupid and too cowardly to participate in politics or the military, and that their freedom and enfranchisement would inevitably lead to chaos.

One of the most important incubators for the Black stupidity stereotype was the wildly popular black-face minstrel shows of the mid-19th through mid-20th century. Their mimicked Black dialect was injected with constant malapropisms meant to drive home

³⁰⁹ Lott 1993, 38; Frick 2012, 68

³¹⁰ In George Tucker’s *Valley of Shenandoah*, the New Yorker protagonist, having returned from his long visit to Virginia, is teased by his future wife: “I believe you have lost our relish for plays by your residence in Virginia,” to which he responds, “I find my old tastes returning fast since I have breathed my native air.” (Tucker [1824] 1970, 2.271) In William Caruther’s *Kentuckian in New-York*, the namesake Kentuckian is taken to his first play performance and blusteringly shouts warnings and advice at the actors, not understanding that the characters are not real people. (Caruthers 1834, 1.215-23)

that Black folk were comically incapable of intellectualism. This is nowhere better exemplified than in the genre's common 'stump speech' trope, in which a black-face character stands at a podium and delivers a political speech, theological sermon, or scientific lesson, the contents of which prove the speaker to be ridiculous and unfit for such educational roles. Harry Newton's *De United Skates*, for instance, portrays a black-face character "wot knows wot he am talkin' 'bout," who delivers a political speech concerning the troubles of the world, much of which are money-related, but the speaker also hones in on a more pressing issue: "Us am gittin' too smaht. Yes, sah. Us knows too much foh de 'mount ob brains us got. In odder words, us am too intellectualfied. Jes' like a man wot eats so much dat he am too big foh his pants. Somefin' am gwine bust foh sho'." The comedy of the sketch, though, obviously depends on the irony of so stupid a character pretentiously offering solutions to the world's ills.³¹¹ Likewise, Newton's *Listen Heah, You Sinnahs* is an excellent example of a black-face religious sermon that portrays Black preachers as incompetent Bible scholars and their congregation as confused.³¹² Charles White's *Great Burlesque on Phrenology* painted his black-face speaker as a mere pretender-scientist and long-syllable swindler while he 'examined' another black-face character's skull: "His locality am so individualized wid his human nature, dat de

³¹¹ The black-face character's ignorance is comically over-determined. He has no conception of large numerical figures: "Does you know how much dey [odder countries] owes us? 'Co'se you doan'. You doan'; I doan'; nobody doan'. It am way up in de hundereds somewhar." (Newton 1905, 84-8) This sketch's speaker's vainglorious declaration of his knowledgeableness is a stereotypical trope of the genre. Cf. Charles White's *Mr. Peabody's Brief Description of his New Society* wherein a political club debates "wedder de sun stood still on its own axeltrees, while Julian Cesar fort his battles." The speaker declares that he is "bery well 'lightened on dis subject," so he "rose to consplain to dem de absurdity ob de idea," and his answer is just as absurd as the question. For it, he is rudely "compelled from de society," and in denial he resolves "neber to trow way my 'bilities agin 'mong such thick-headed niggers." (Christy and White 1854, 4.84)

³¹² This preacher 'denounces' the congregation for "lub-makin' in de chu'ch befo', at de time ob, or aftah, de su'vices," having sensually mistook the commandment to "lub yo' neighbah," a joke pointing back to Black hyper-sexuality stereotypes. The sermon is finished off with the congregation singing "We Doan' Know Why," emphasising their confusion with Christian doctrine. (Newton 1905, 71-5)

adhesiveness ob de moral sentiments can't cowerse on his philotututitibness or to be more complex, he is troubled wid de catipillar, horse-radish, polywog tincture ob blue ruin.”³¹³ The malapropisms of this speech quickly give way to pure gibberish of a sort that finds no parallel in ancient depictions of slaves and freedmen. The Greeks were used to seeing slaves and barbarians perform intellectual and administrative tasks, so the depiction of intelligent slaves was not viewed as inherently ludicrous. Euripides' slave in the *Acharnians* is humorous for how he successfully delivers a Euripidean paradox. Americans, on the other hand, generally did find Black slaves in intellectual roles to be ludicrous, and they loved to laugh at black-face characters that pretentiously played these roles and utterly failed at them. It reassured Whites that only they themselves were fit for politics, theology, and science, and that only they themselves should have access to the education necessary for their practice. Such was the mindset of one Louisiana representative, who, when he stopped by a school established by the Freedmen's Bureau, asked, “Is this a school?” “Yes.” “What, for niggers? ... Well, well, I have seen many an absurdity in my lifetime, but *this is the climax!*”³¹⁴

John Strausbaugh, a pop-culture researcher, argues that the stupidity embodied by black-face characters was not unique to Black characters. Every ethnicity, he claims, was painted as equally “dumb” in minstrel show routines and on the vaudeville stage.³¹⁵ This interpretation seems misguided to me on two counts. Firstly, it discounts the fact that the antebellum period was rife with laws directed specifically at keeping even free Black folk

³¹³ Christy and White 1854, 2.81-2

³¹⁴ J.J. Alvord in *Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction*, Part II, p. 247 (as quoted and cited in Du Bois 1935, 637)

³¹⁵ Strausbaugh 2006, 131

from learning to read lest they become competitors for non-menial jobs.³¹⁶ Poor Whites' education was barely existent, but never outlawed, and during and after the Reconstruction period, when the freedmen had instigated the development of a public school system, Whites were the real winners. Tax funds invariably were siphoned into segregated White schools completely out of proportion with the South's demographics, forcing Black students into schools that were by comparison mere hovels and that repeatedly suffered arson and White mob attacks.³¹⁷ The stupidity stereotyping of Irish, German, Italian, and Jewish immigrants and their descendants, therefore, stemmed from the reality of their poverty—and vanished with it—whereas Black stupidity stereotypes were shaped out of an even more abject and persisting poverty and, over and above this, structural racism. Racist ideologues of the antebellum and counter-Revolutionary periods actively forced Black folk into living, economic, and educational conditions that ensured their majority conformity with the stupidity stereotype necessary to 'justify' and assuage the guilt attached to these periods' political aims. Secondly, stereotypical Black stupidity was not constructed as simply a general ignorance like that attached to Irish, German, Italian, and Jewish ethnicities, but rather it was constructed as diametrically opposed to the character of American citizenship.³¹⁸ The black-face expressions of slaves' and

³¹⁶ Jones 1998, 203. Cf. Du Bois' wise words: "The mass of slaves could have no education. The laws on this point were explicit and severe. There was teaching, here and there, by indulgent masters, or by clandestine Negro schools, but in the main, the laws were followed. All the slave states had such laws, and after the Nat Turner insurrection in Virginia, these laws were strengthened and more carefully enforced. ... At the time of emancipation, not all the Southern Negroes were illiterate. In South Carolina, a majority of the nearly 10,000 free Negroes could read and write, and perhaps 5% of the slaves. But illiteracy among the colored population was well over 95% in 1863, which meant that less than 150,000 of the four million slaves emancipated could read and write." (Du Bois 1935, 638)

³¹⁷ Du Bois 1935, 637-67

³¹⁸ "Negroes were lazy, poor and ignorant. Moreover their ignorance was more than the ignorance of whites. It was a biological, fundamental and ineradicable ignorance based on pronounced and eternal racial differences. The democracy and freedom open and possible to white men of English stock, and even to Continental Europeans, were unthinkable in the case of Africans." (Du Bois 1935, 132)

freedmen's political, religious, and scientific ignorance existed in a broader milieu of stereotypical, citizenship-incompatible Black shortcomings. In every medium imaginable Black folk were derided as incapable of comprehending and participating in American law, of exercising authority of any kind, and of ever bridging the *genetic* gap between White and Black levels of intelligence.

Slaveholders were resolute that their Black slaves needed simple directives concerning ethical behaviour because the American law system was too complex for them to handle, a stereotype that justified their near total exclusion from that legal system. When traveller John Legare penned an account of his "excursion into Southern Georgia," he received some written notes about slave management from the owner of the Hopeton plantation. In that note, the slaveholder proclaimed, "The rules and regulations established are few and simple. ... Our refinement in the police and over legislation are ill adapted to the structure of negro society. Simplicity should pervade every department."³¹⁹ Plantation novels were just as adamant that Blacks were incapable of using the legal system as White citizens did. In William Gilmore Simms' *The Golden Christmas*, the hog-stealing Jehu can only defend himself in arbitration by insisting "Der's someting mek me do it." Jehu, a representation of the typical plantation slave 'type', has no conception of legality and is mentally unequipped to make a cogent argument. He makes no appeal to general moral precepts, laws, or even precedents on the plantation.³²⁰ Thomas Dixon's *The Clansman* makes a similar point about freedmen when he portrays an illiterate ex-slave, Uncle Aleck, being swindled by some Northern dandies who claim to be surveyors sent

³¹⁹ John D. Legare, "Account of an Agricultural Excursion made into the South of Georgia in the winter of 1832; by the Editor," *Southern Agriculturalist* 6 (March, April, July, November 1833): 138-41, 157-62, 167, 358-63, 671-77 (as cited and excerpted in Schwaab and Bull 1973, 1.259)

³²⁰ Simms 1852, 165-8

to apportion to slaves their 40 acres. The American legal system, claims Dixon, was too complex for Black folk—a Black Justice of the Supreme Court is to Dixon a “hideous dream.”³²¹ For Whites, though, plantation novels insisted the system was a breeze. In George Tucker’s *The Valley of Shenandoah*, the slaveholding protagonist Edward Grayson has to undergo training as a lawyer so he can earn the money needed to cover his family’s extensive debts, and, even though his life has been one of unadulterated leisure, he speeds through his legal education in no more than a year. This sort of citizen-slave, White-Black contrast is nowhere present in ancient Greek Comedy and Tragedy’s depictions of slaves and freedmen. Tragedy’s captive slaves like Andromache and Hecuba easily contend with royals in debates, and in Menander’s *Arbitration* the slaves Syros and Daos each offer up rhetorically plausible arguments during the titular case. While the Greeks’ certainly curtailed slaves’ ability to bring legal charges against others, no restrictions were placed on ex-slave citizens, certainly not on the basis of race or skin colour as in the United States. Therefore the Greeks did not feel pressured to develop American-style stereotypes that shifted blame for slaves’ and freedmen’s exclusion from the justice system away from active oppression and onto slaves’ supposedly natural intellectual deficiencies. This contrast suggests Strausbaugh’s claim is false, that American comedy lampooned all ethnicities, regardless of colour, as equally “dumb”. That is how ancient Greek Comedy operated, and, with respect to legalistic intelligence, ancient and modern slave or freedmen characters hardly resemble each other.

³²¹ Dixon 1905, 239-43 & 273: “Dr. Cameron watched the movements of the black judge, already notorious for the sale of his opinions, with a sense of sickening horror. This man was but yesterday a slave, his father a medicine-man in an African jungle who decided the guilt or innocence of the accused by the test of administering poison. If the poison killed the man, he was guilty; if he survived, he was innocent. For four thousand years his land had stood a solid bulwark of unbroken barbarism. Out of its darkness he had been thrust upon the seat of judgement of the laws of the proudest and highest type of man evolved in time. It seemed a hideous dream.”

This is just as true with respect to authoritative intelligence. Many American slaveholders and proslavery ideologues insisted that Black Americans were naturally unfit for any authority at all. Plantation novels expressed this by portraying Black drivers, those who supervised and ‘motivated’ the work of plantation slaves, as a disastrous force and as walking contradictions. In Caruthers’ *The Kentuckian in New-York* the overseer replaces an abusive Black slave driver, who then attempts to take revenge by burning down the Big House’s library and attempting to strangle the protagonist in his sleep, for which offenses he is sold. The plantation’s mistress, who is certainly here parroting Caruthers’ personal views as a slaveholder, explains that the driver’s violent actions were the result of putting him in a position of authority:

This ignorant creature was elevated by the overseer to an authority which tended to excite rather than subdue his bad passions, and one which I doubt whether any ignorant negro can exercise without injury to himself and his fellows. It clothes the slave with the authority and some of the privileges of the master; two conditions which are entirely incompatible with each other. ... I am determined, henceforward, to have no more black drivers on the plantation.³²²

As Eugene Genovese put it, “Proslavery propaganda insisted that the blacks could not govern themselves, that the drivers were naturally despotic and cruel, and that white supervision alone protected the slaves from abuse.”³²³ This stereotype at once justified the denial of any authority to the vast majority of Blacks—laws were widely passed requiring the presence of a White overseer or master amongst slaves at all times—and it also turned Black folk into scapegoats for the violence inflicted upon them on plantations.

³²² Caruthers 1834, 2.70-1. Cf. Kemble 1863, 89: “The worst of all tyrants is the one who has been a slave, and, for that matter ...the command of one slave to another is altogether the most uncompromising utterance of insolent truculent despotism that it ever fell to my lot to witness.”

³²³ Genovese 1974, 383

White authority figures, proslavery ideologues claimed, were intelligent enough to understand that wanton violence was counterproductive in the maintaining of a motivated work force. Black authority figures were not.³²⁴ It should be noted that the ancient Greek sources never seem to have developed this sort of stereotype. Daos in Menander's *The Shield* takes command of the household when its masters fail to rise to the challenge of thwarting the old uncle's inheritance manipulations, and Xenophon writes that citizens and slaves made for equally effective bailiffs for Greeks' estates. The Greek slave system routinely assigned public and private administrative roles to slaves, and Greek cities often absorbed slaves or slaves' sons into their citizen bodies, so their slaving ideology tended toward an intelligent slave stereotype to facilitate these societal practices. American ideology tended toward the opposite because the societal practices of their "closed system" were essentially opposite to the Greeks'.

The lack of authoritative intelligence, the American proslavery ideologues asserted, also rendered Black folk incapable of adequate military command. The majority of White

³²⁴ Notwithstanding the reality that there were some cruel Black drivers, many slaveholders understood that electing one of the slaves from their plantation population was likely to produce a better driver than employing a White overseer in that capacity. The chosen slave was well acquainted with the precedents set for work rhythms, knew intimately the workers under his authority, and thus could best mediate between the demands of the masters and the abilities or inclinations of the slaves. Several masters trusted their slave drivers more than overseers, sometimes even forgoing employing a White at all and allowing the slave driver to essentially run the plantation while the masters were away. (Genovese 1974, 374-8) Olmsted recorded numerous examples of such plantation management, noting that "where the drivers are discreet, experienced and trusty, the overseer is frequently employed merely as a matter of form, to comply with the laws requiring the superintendence or presence of a white man among every body of slaves, and his duty is rather to inspect and report, than to govern. Mr. X. considers his overseer an uncommonly efficient and faithful one, but he would not employ him, even during the summer, when he is absent for several months, if the law did not require it. He has sometimes left his plantation in care of one of the drivers for a considerable length of time, after having discharged an overseer; and he thinks it has then been quite as well conducted as ever. His overseer consults the drivers on all important points, and is governed by their advice." (Olmsted [1856] 1968, 438) Tellingly, Olmsted notes that one of the rules for overseers on Mr. X's plantation is that "he shall never punish a negro with his own hands," for the reason, Mr. X claims, that "it secures time for deliberation, and prevents punishment being made in a sudden passion." (Ibid. 438-9) Certainly another reason for this practice is so that Whites would have no, or at least less, blood on their hands as a result of the violence of slave driving, leaving open the propagandistic excuse that Blacks were really the cruel ones in the system of slavery, just as is put forth by Caruthers and Kemble above.

military men should have understood that this stereotype was ill-grounded, for Black soldiers were some of the most educated of their population owing to military training and the budget which the army devoted to its schools. Jack Foner quoted a “visitor to the hospital at Benton Barracks in Missouri” who explained that a “very large proportion of the blacks had books in their hands, or within reach on their beds,” and that these sick or injured had been “organized into a school.”³²⁵ Nevertheless Black soldiers were almost invariably relegated, in the Civil War especially, to drudge work and the very few that were commissioned as officers were often unceremoniously dismissed from service and replaced by White men.³²⁶ Blacks’ exclusion from military command was predicated on the notion that a Black commander could never best a White one, and black-face minstrelsy produced songs that spread just that message. For example, the song *De Nigger General* asked, “don’t you know your Uncle Gabel? He was a Nigger General,” memorable for how “de whites they caught him, an’ dey fought him... dey drove him to de gallows... an’ dey hung him an’ dey swung him... So dat were de last ob Uncle Gabel.”³²⁷ Aspiring to military leadership earned this black-face ‘general’ a “poetic lynching,” as Edith Hall would say. So too was it presented by Dixon in his *Clansman*, where the freedmen militias are described as “black hordes of former slaves, with the intelligence of children and the instincts of savages.”³²⁸ The racist White-Black contrast as it pertained to military command was nearly as fervently expressed after World War I. In 1925 the Army War College produced a ‘study’ on the *Employment of Negro Man Power in War* which was simply a repackaging of these well-worn Black stupidity

³²⁵ J. D. Foner 1974, 40-1

³²⁶ Ibid. 43

³²⁷ Christy and White 1854, 3.52-3

³²⁸ Dixon 1905, 289. For Black military failure in Dixon’s novel, see: p. 227-8.

stereotypes. The study plainly stated that while Black men are “physically qualified for combat duty,” they are “mentally inferior to the white man,” as is ‘proven’ by both pseudo-science—“the cranial capacity of the negro is smaller than the white; his brain weighing 35 ounces contrasted with 45 for the white”—and, as was becoming a popular trend in the 20th century, by IQ tests, on which Blacks generally scored much lower. Therefore when the study addressed specifically “The Negro Officer,” it claimed that “they showed a lack of mental capacity for command,” since the officer “was still a Negro, with all the faults and weaknesses of character inherent in the Negro race, exaggerated by the fact that he work [sic] an officer’s uniform.”³²⁹

Not only were Blacks denigrated as stupid in every field imaginable, proslavery and segregationist ideologues argued that Black folk would never, no matter the amount of education they received, catch up to Whites in intellectualism and academic achievement. This reasoning was borne out of the strict limitations set for Blacks’ access to education, for the vast majority of American slaves could not read or write due to slave laws and to the constant work rhythm of plantations, and cyclically it justified the continued discrimination against Black education. Perhaps the simplest way to express this racial stereotype was to feign that no Black man or woman had completed any sufficiently intellectual project, as Thomas Jefferson argued. In his *Notes on the State of Virginia* he claimed that “in memory they are equal to the whites; in reason much inferior, as I think one could scarcely be found capable of tracing and comprehending the investigations of

³²⁹ Col. Bishop, Major Drain and Major Somervell 1925, unpaginated. The report also contains a series of extracts from “Competent Army Officers” that claim, “colored officers as a class are unfit to command troops in present-day warfare,” and “I do not remember in thirteen months service a single report coming from a Negro officer that ever have sufficient information to base any plan thereon, and practically every report had to be checked up by some white officer.”

Euclid; and that in imagination they are dull, tasteless, and anomalous.”³³⁰ Unsure that his generalisation would weather appeals to individual examples of Black intellectual excellence, Jefferson proceeded to dismiss the achievements of these men and women, as though he alone were a capable arbiter of artistic and intellectual merit.³³¹ About Phyllis Wheatley, an enslaved poet who paired her love of Classical mythology with sonorous rhymes, Jefferson smugly wrote, “Religion has produced a Phyllis Whately [sic]; but it could not produce a poet. The compositions published under her name are below the dignity of criticism.”³³² Not even the self-taught mathematical wunderkinds, Thomas Fuller and Benjamin Benneker, whose intellects proved to other Americans that Jefferson’s condemnation of Black folk’s mental abilities was nonsense, could truly sway Jefferson on the subject, and he accused Benneker of fraud.³³³ “He had spherical trigonometry enough to make almanacs,” wrote Jefferson, “but not without the suspicion of aid from Ellicot, who was his neighbour and friend, and never missed an opportunity of puffing him. I have a long letter from Banneker, which shows him to have had a mind of very common stature indeed.”³³⁴ For Jefferson, slavery and the antebellum caste system were ‘schools’, but they could not bring Black intellectuals to the same level as White ones. Black folk were simply naturally inferior in mental abilities and there was no ‘school’ that could change that fact, so society need not change to accommodate for

³³⁰ Jefferson 1788, 149-50

³³¹ Winthrop Jordan gleefully notes that Jefferson’s judgements are nonsensical since he himself admitted in other writings that “of all men living I am the last who should undertake to decide as to the merits of poetry. In earlier life I was fond of it, and easily pleased.” to John D. Burke, Washington, June 21, 1801, Ford, ed., *Works of Jefferson*, IX, 267 (as quoted and cited in Jordan 1968, 438).

³³² Jefferson 1788, 150

³³³ Jordan 1968, 449-50

³³⁴ to Joel Barlow, Monticello, Oct. 8, 1809, Ford, ed., *Works of Jefferson*, XI, 120-1 (as quoted and cited in Jordan 1968, 454)

human equality. This continued to be the reasoning that undergirded post-Civil War segregationists' anti-Black educational discrimination. For example, Howard Odum in 1910 claimed that Black men and women "attain little in the intellectual way beyond childhood. Even with better advantages offered, and under competent instruction in all cases, they would face tremendous odds." Odum's solution to this educational issue was to prescribe separate schooling with "simpler exercises" that have "a special purpose in view," namely the combat of Blacks' other supposedly natural characteristics such as their "criminal tendencies."³³⁵

As the late 19th and early 20th centuries furnished more and more examples of clearly intelligent Black individuals in virtually every field, segregationist ideologues could no longer outright dismiss these individuals in the manner of Jefferson, and so they more or less abandoned anecdotal evidence of Black inferiority for statistical measures that supported their generalisations. The chief method of doing so was the use of standardised testing, especially IQ tests, which lent racist conclusions the veneer of impartiality. These tests, of course, discount that the levels of education available to Whites and Blacks were wildly divergent and that this would result in similarly divergent abilities to succeed on such tests. Instead segregationist ideologues claimed that the IQ tests' results for general intelligence, the *g* figure, pierced through all social differences and measured raw intelligence. Hence Segregationists could compile IQ test results into racial categories and point to races' average IQ differences as proof that Black intellectual inferiority was natural and genetic, and therefore segregationist discrimination in education, politics, and

³³⁵ Odum, Howard, *Social and Mental Traits of the Negro* (New York: Columbia University press, 1910), pp. 37-50 (as excerpted in Newby 1968, 63-9). See Woodson [1933] 2010 on how rhetoric like Odum's resulted in a segregated education for Black folk that amounted to little more than brain-washing and social conditioning to discrimination rather than actual beneficial education.

the military was in accordance with nature. Society need not change. This mindset is baldly and chillingly stated in the 1925 *Employment of Negro Man Power in War* report, which was clearly written by men resistant to pressures to change the racial makeup of the military. When considering intelligence tests taken by potential officers, the report's authors wrote, "if it can be shown that the Negro is given an equal opportunity with the white man to qualify for commissioned grades, and that only his own lack of qualifications prevent his commission... then social and political demands of the administration can be resisted."³³⁶ Allowing undereducated Black men to take the same standardised test as White men was considered "equal opportunity," and Black men's failure to pass the test with the same consistency as Whites (11.5% vs. 74.2%) justified the report's recommendation for maintaining the nearly-all-White *status quo* in commissioning military officers. Supposedly objective genetic difference called for the maintaining of the military's racial hierarchy.

This is exactly same reasoning used to rationalise and justify American society's racial hierarchy many times over the following 100 years, such as in Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray's 1994 *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*. As Jacqueline Jones has persuasively argued, Herrnstein and Murray's work amounted to little more than "hate literature with footnotes," since it deliberately harkened back to Jefferson's ideas about the place of poor, dumb, and Black people—that they belong in disenfranchisement and under the control of the natural "cognitive elite," who, Herrnstein and Murray argued based on IQ scores, happened to be the rich White

³³⁶ Col. Bishop, Major Drain and Major Somervell 1925, unpaginated

men already in political, economic, and social control of the nation.³³⁷ Herrnstein and Murray waxed poetic about Jefferson's idealistic notions of a "natural aristocracy," one "of virtue and talent, which Nature has wisely provided for the direction of the interests of society," and which the best sort of governments syphon into its "high positions."³³⁸ *The Bell Curve*, by arguing that the public schools system worked well to whisk all intelligent (i.e. high IQ) children into college-bound programs and to leave behind the 'dull' students, asserted that this 'natural aristocracy' already existed in American society, and so the only changes the society needed undergo were repeals of affirmative action initiatives that allowed minorities outside of the "cognitive elite" to usurp roles meant to be doled out to 'natural aristocrats', who, in the book's discussion of affirmative action, were invariably White.³³⁹ As proslavery (and pro-landed gentry) ideologues had argued hundreds of years before, and as Jim Crow proponents argued one hundred years before, *The Bell Curve* argued that Black folk's interests were, are, and will be best served by the leadership of rich and paternalistic Whites, a social and political hierarchy which was conveniently already in place and ought only to be modified to strengthen its hierarchical distinctions.³⁴⁰ As dated as this argument is, it has such a reassuring and

³³⁷ Jones 1995, 83-90

³³⁸ Herrnstein and Murray 1994, 530; Jefferson 1914, 58-9

³³⁹ Public school system: Herrnstein and Murray 1994, 103-5; affirmative action: Ibid. 475-7

³⁴⁰ Too much equalitarian morality will result, the authors claim, in an extreme welfare state, which they dub the *custodial state*, by which they mean "a high-tech and more lavish version of the Indian reservation for some substantial minority of the nation's population, while the rest of America tries to go about its business. In its less benign forms, the solutions will become more and more totalitarian." (Herrnstein and Murray 1994, 526) To avoid this, America must allow for the 'cognitive elite' to maintain a vice grip on paternalistic societal positions so as to obviate the need for governmental interventions by themselves caring for the needs of the 'dull' underclass. (Ibid. 527-52) They do not explain how the 'cognitive elite' will maintain its version of welfare without slipping into totalitarianism, except that these elites will be trained in moral excellence. It is notable that the Old Oligarch makes no such logical failing when critiquing Athenian democracy, noting that, should the poor ever be locked out of political affairs, the rich will not fail to run the government exclusively in their own favour. (I.4-9) *The Bell Curve*'s argument is approximately 2400 years out of date.

convincing quality for Whites of both rich and poor backgrounds that it is still in the 2010s being repackaged, such as in Nicholas Wade's 2014 *A Troublesome Inheritance: Genes, Race and Human History*, where European colonial conquests and the regimes spawned from them are framed as reflections of genetic superiority which ought to be emulated. The geneticists, around whose work Nicholas Wade feigns to have built his book, harshly criticise his book in an open letter: "Wade juxtaposes an incomplete and inaccurate account of our research on human genetic differences with speculation that recent natural selection has led to worldwide differences in I.Q. test results, political institutions and economic development. We reject Wade's implication that our findings substantiate his guesswork. They do not."³⁴¹

The White American insistence that Black folk will never intellectually catch up to Whites (and should not try) feels hyperbolic by comparison with ancient Greek views of slaves' mental abilities. The Greeks in general did not denigrate slaves' intellect as a point of natural difference with citizens, and in fact often stressed that slaves and citizens were equally smart or dumb, a view which makes intrinsic sense in city-state societies that could and often did employ slaves at the same jobs as citizens, assigned them as public administrators, and absorbed slaves and sons of slaves directly into their citizenries. Hence the Xanthias of *Frogs* and the Daos of *The Shield* are presented as just as intelligent, if not more so, than their own masters, and in later times the literary or philosophical works of slaves' sons or freedmen such as Horace and Epictetus were not maligned as inferior to those of citizens—or at least not inferior simply because they were written by freedmen. Plato's *Meno* boldly suggests that everybody, free or slave,

³⁴¹ *New York Times*, August 8th, 2014, "Letters: 'A Troublesome Inheritance'" (<http://goo.gl/G5EbyD>). Cf. Charles Murray's glowing review: *The Wall Street Journal*, May 2nd, 2014, "Book Review: 'A Troublesome Inheritance'" (<http://goo.gl/VdxlS4>).

has the same underlying potential for intellectual development. The dialogue contains the precept that souls are immortal, have witnessed all the truths reality has to offer, and retain these observations when inserted into a new individuals' body. Acquiring knowledge, therefore, is really recollecting truths observed in previous lives, an ability by no means exclusive to a certain social status. The dialogue stresses this point by having Socrates guide Meno's house-born, uneducated slave through a dialectical inquiry in which the slave is demonstrated as 'recollecting' geometric concepts.³⁴² Similarly, Xenophon presents the training of a slave bailiff, endowing him with most of the managerial knowledge of a master, as unproblematic, and so too do Demosthenes' speeches present artisans and bankers passing on their trade knowledge and literacy to their slaves.³⁴³ Later periods' use of slaves and freedmen as doctors and teachers was facilitated by this traditional understanding of slaves as intellectually capable.³⁴⁴ White Americans' staunch exclusion of Black folk from republican citizenship required drastic and exculpatory stereotypes about Black intellectual inferiority, but the Greeks were generally less exclusionary and hence they did not require such an ideological construct. Their more "open system" fostered instead images of smart slaves, who upon manumission would be capable members of Greek society. By comparison, the Greek conception of slaves' mental abilities reveals just how "closed" to free Black folk American society was.

³⁴² Plato *Meno* 80

³⁴³ Xenophon *Oeconomicus* 7.41, 12.3-4; Demosthenes 45.71-2. Even Aristotle's 'slaves by nature', who are deficient in specifically *deliberative* reasoning, aren't presented as dunces of the sort found in American proslavery literature, nor are they reflective of his contemporary reality. (Heath 2008; *Politics* 1254b-1255b) Furthermore, his reference to environmental differences posits that some Greeks are just as one-sided as the dumb-but-brave mountainous peoples and the barbarians of the North. (*Politics* 1327b.19-40)

³⁴⁴ Mouritsen 2011, 179

The other two stereotypes that disqualified Black folk from citizenship in the minds of many White Americans during the 18th through 20th centuries were Black cowardice and the chaos that would ensue if Blacks were freed *en masse*. Because these stereotypes were somewhat less prominent in proslavery ideology as opposed to segregationist ideology, they will be dealt with more briefly.

As fearful as White Americans were of slave insurrections, they nevertheless excluded Blacks from militia and military service with the claim that they were naturally too cowardly and superstitious for it, which set them at odds with White Americans' presumed fighting spirit.³⁴⁵ During the Revolutionary War, historian Jack Foner argues, "many leaders of the Revolution, including Washington, were unwilling to countenance the use of blacks as soldiers, for they considered them too cowardly, servile, and distinctly inferior by nature."³⁴⁶ During the Civil War, when the Union general David Hunter's proposal to use Black men as soldiers was read in the House of Representatives, it was met with "universal peals of laughter... It was the great joke of the day... seized upon by the whole loyal press of the country as a kind of politico-military champagne cocktail."³⁴⁷ In Dixon's *The Clansman* the ex-slave Gus is shown to be a coward when his former master beats him with a fence post, and Gus, instead of retaliating with his military-issued gun, simply flees.³⁴⁸ The 1925 report on the *Employment of Negro Man Power in War* presents Black military participation as equally comical: "The negro is a

³⁴⁵ W.E.B. Du Bois: "Even the black man's friend were skeptical about the possibility of using him as a soldier, and far from its being to the credit of black men, or any men, that they did not want to kill, the ability and willingness to take human life has always been, even in the minds of liberal men, a proof of manhood." (Du Bois 1935, 104) Cf. Sarah Rowson's construction of White American manhood as naturally disposed to fighting for freedom, discussed later. See: p. 187, n. 547.

³⁴⁶ J. D. Foner 1974, 7. Cf. Du Bois 1935, 56, 104, on Civil War era claims of cowardice.

³⁴⁷ Du Bois 1935, 93

³⁴⁸ Dixon 1905, 216-7

rank coward in the dark. His fear of the unknown and unseen will prevent him from ever operating as an individual scout with success.”³⁴⁹

Black cowardice was a stereotype, and, like most of the racist stereotypes discussed in this chapter, it was exculpatory. Cowardice was merely the cover that proslavery and segregationist ideologues used to mask that their exclusion of Black men from the militia and military stemmed in reality from their desire to disallow roles for Blacks to play that would train, educate, and instill them with a sense of equality that might inspire political agitation for equal rights. This is clear by how the state of Louisiana, when in panic over British attack during the War of 1812, authorised the formation of a free Black militia unit with the following stipulation: “That... certain free men of color be chosen from among the Creoles, and from among such as shall have paid a State tax... and [they] must have been, for two years previous, owners, or sons of owners of a landed property of at least the value of three hundred dollars.”³⁵⁰ When Blacks had a vested interest in the *status quo*, and as a result their inclusion into military affairs would not inspire revolutionary attitudes for enslaved Blacks, the cowardice stereotype disappears and they become fit for service. This again stands in stark opposition to the ancient Greeks who employed the services of slaves in both their infantry and navy, resulting in the stereotypical slave being just as brave as citizens and masters. Daos in *The Shield* goes off to war with his master and handily defeats the enemies whom he attacks, and Xanthias in *Frogs* soundly thrashes both Hades’ monsters and Aeacus’ guards. Antebellum plantation novels rarely present cowardly slaves, but they just as rarely write

³⁴⁹ Col. Bishop, Major Drain and Major Somervell 1925, unpaginated

³⁵⁰ Sterkx 1972, 195

their slaves into situations requiring bravery. The novelists were too wedded to an ideology of difference.

For the novelists, the situation in which Black slaves *would* show murderous tendencies was mass emancipation. This, the antebellum novelists insisted, would result in immediate anarchy and destructive chaos, since Black folk were naturally incompatible with republican citizenship, let alone fit to establish a new and functional government. The novels raised the spectre of an exaggerated African barbarism or the revolution in St. Domingo, unwilling to distinguish between bloody revolution and the political reforms that would necessarily follow legal emancipation.³⁵¹ The ‘White republic’ was perfect, and any modification to include Blacks was viewed as precipitating its destruction. Despite stereotypes about Black complacency, docility, and cowardice, proslavery ideologues could not shake the fear of Black folk as a threat to social order, so they argued that Blacks were better kept in servitude than admitted to citizenship or even freedman status. In George Tucker’s *The Valley of Shenandoah*, for instance, the protagonist makes this pronouncement about the slaves:

No thinking man supposed that we could emancipate them, and safely let them remain in the country; and no good or prudent man would run the risk of renewing the scenes which have made St. Domingo one general scene of waste and butchery. . . . We cannot confer on them, or restore to them (if you will) some of those rights which we ourselves

³⁵¹ Mary Renda’s 2001 *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940* includes a lengthy and masterful discussion of the Herculean efforts by African Americans to rehabilitate the Haitian revolution in the American imagination in a way inclusive to both Black and White folk, and to combat the legacy of antebellum ideologues’ manipulation of the revolution for racial propaganda. See especially pp. 281-5.

so highly prize, without endangering not only these, but every other we possess.³⁵²

The ‘thinking’ or ‘intelligent’ thing to do for America, popular Southern novelists insisted, was to leave in place the American legal protections for personal liberty and personal property, which would then apply to Blacks and Whites both, something they claim that their Black slaves are not intelligent enough to comprehend. Instead, the freed slaves would upend the social order and violate planters’ sacred property rights, trampling over a constitution that these novelists claimed had no smart alternative, certainly not one that could come from Black politicians. The antebellum novelists presented their slaves as unable to grasp concepts more complex than short-sighted vengeance and reparation, dumb moves given that slavery was such a well-provided existence under the paternalistic guidance of the novels’ impossibly unrealistic planter characters. In short, these novelists present slaves as totally unfit for American citizenship, since in freedom they would reject the values and legal restrictions by which it was created.

It is remarkable how consistent early 20th century segregationist ideologues were in presenting Reconstruction as the fulfilment of these novelists’ predictions. In complete contradiction with the facts of Black folk’s participation in Reconstruction, these ideologues painted Black troops and politicians as barbaric marauders and greedy thieves. For example, ‘Pitchfork’ Ben Tillman, who himself led a group of Red Shirts that plundered Blacks’ property, murdering and terrorising them to keep them from voting, raged on the senate floor:

³⁵² Tucker [1824] 1970, 61-2. Cf. the almost identical passage in Caruthers 1834, 71-2: “To emancipate them where they are, would be, then, to surrender life, liberty, and property... [resulting in] a tyranny ten times worse than the slavery of the South, in the lawless outrages and uncontrollable fury of the savage mob.”

[Reconstruction] was a condition bordering on anarchy. Misrule, robbery, and murder were holding high carnival. The people's substance was being stolen, and there was no incentive to labor. Our legislature was composed of a majority of negroes, most of whom could neither read nor write. . . . They were taxing us to death and confiscating our property. We felt the very foundations of our civilisation crumbling beneath our feet, that we were sure to be engulfed by the black flood of barbarians who were surrounding us and had been put over us by the Army. . . . A condition had arisen such as had never been the lot of white men at any time in the history of the world to endure.³⁵³

By casting the Black individuals who spearheaded the democratic reforms of Reconstruction as at once riotous, greedy, vengeful, and generally unfit for the long-sighted and sympathetic thinking needed for the practice of good governance, segregationist ideologues sought to mask the fact that they themselves were the “riotous, greedy, and vengeful monsters” of their era. While freedman politicians pushed for reforms that broadened voting rights (for Whites too!), instituted the first systematised public school system (for Whites too!), and attempted to parcel out farmsteads to workers so as to gain for them some economic independence (for poor Whites too!), the White Southern elite offered the poor White labourers a political alliance and descended into an “orgy of murder, arson, and theft” aimed at reinstating a social order as close in form to racial slavery as possible. The elite used racial propaganda such as Tillman’s to justify this ‘orgy’, and to manipulate the White labourers, who, as W.E.B. Du Bois puts it, “became the instrument by which democracy in the nation was done to death, race

³⁵³ *Congressional Record*, Vol. 41, Cong. 59, Sess. 2, p. 1440. Tillman too loved to play up the themes of African barbarism and the fearful Haitian Revolution. Later in this same speech: “I here declare that if the white men of South Carolina had been content to obey the laws which had been forced down our throats at the point of the bayonet and submit to the reconstruction acts which had thrust the ballot into the hands of ignorant and debased negroes, slaves five years before, and only two or three generations removed from the barbarians of Africa, the State of South Carolina to-day would be a howling wilderness, a second Santo Domingo.”

provincialism deified, and the world delivered to plutocracy.”³⁵⁴ This deliverance came through Judge Lynch, and his wanton, fanatical violence instilled a deep guilt in the White population that could only be mollified by propagandistic romanticism.³⁵⁵

The bigotry of the American insistence that their slaves, even when emancipated, would never be fit for citizenship appears even more acute in comparative perspective. As detailed in the previous chapters, the ancient Greeks felt that slaves could have the qualities necessary for citizenship, and they acted upon that opinion. Slaves could be incorporated into the citizen body following extraordinary proofs of their valorous commitment to the safety of the city-state, such as in Athens after the Battles of Marathon and Arginusae. Individual slaves, like Pasion, could buy their way into Athenian citizenship, or, like the *παιδαγωγός* employed by Themistocles, be instated as citizens elsewhere when a new *polis* was founded. When they emancipated their enemies’ slaves or dependant populations the Greeks did not leave them to be reabsorbed into their ex-masters’ societies. The helots who successfully revolted from Sparta or were freed by Athens during the Peloponnesian War were resettled into their own *polis* at Naupactus, and their military alliance with the Athenians was crucial during that war’s first phase. The Spartans eventually took Naupactus and dispersed the Messenians, but, after the Thebans defeated the Spartans at Leuctra, the Messenians were recalled to the Peloponnese to reform their ancestral *polis* Messene with their ancestral Doric traditions.

³⁵⁴ Du Bois 1935, 241

³⁵⁵ The final chapter of Du Bois’ *Black Reconstruction* runs through ‘The Propaganda of History’, detailing how early 20th century historians and textbook authors force-fed Southern students images of the ‘unfit for citizenship’ Black man: ignorant, greedy, and short-sighted. (Du Bois 1935, 711-2) Thomas Dixon’s novels offered the in-denial, 20th century South just this sort of romantic propaganda, constantly trumpeting the theme that Black folk were destructively unfit for republican citizenship. Pertinent passages of his *The Clansman* include: President Lincoln’s long diatribe on the “millions of an alien, inferior race” (p. 46ff); Reconstruction’s description as “a servile reign of terror” (Dixon 1905, 104, 110); Reconstruction politicians’ portrayal as barbarian, “belted satraps” (p. 140, 146); etc. (p. 155, 214-5). Particularly vile is his portrayal of Black men voting with rat labels for the “ratification ob de Constertooshun!” (p. 246-52)

Unlike Americans' colonising and missionary gambit of Liberia, and unlike the politically excluded and economically degraded Haiti, Messene was established as part of the Hellenic community and treated seriously as a Greek equal among its ally city-states despite the Messenians' nearly 300 years of subjection to Spartan mastery.³⁵⁶ Furthermore, Pausanias' deeply sympathetic accounts of the Messenian Wars, the first being an attempt to maintain and the second to retake their freedom from the Spartans, show that, for many Greeks, the struggles of a subject people for the rights of free men were not considered a "nightmare"—well, perhaps in Sparta.³⁵⁷ Where Southern segregationist ideologues succeeded in silencing anti-segregationist Northerners through racial propaganda, the Spartans were not able to succeed in convincing the other Greeks that their subject people were unfit for citizenship. The above differences in handling the freeing of slaves and in dealing with freedmen highlight in my opinion that an egalitarian ethos predominated in ancient Greece, whereas American society was shot through with a powerful discourse of difference. This is reflected in the stereotypes that the societies developed about their slaves' fitness for citizenship.

II. Laziness

Of the stereotypes discussed in this chapter, laziness took the longest to be transformed into a pervasive Black racial stereotype, because stereotypical laziness resided within a nexus of several different White elite ideological needs. Elite discourse about laziness, therefore, oscillated between claims that it was an inborn, natural character trait or that industry was an "ethic" that could be imbued through Protestantism and proximity to those who set an example of industriousness. The influence of free labour advocacy on

³⁵⁶ Pausanias *Description of Greece* 4.24.7-29.13

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 4.4.4-24.6

proslavery discourse kept this oscillation alive until the Civil War, after which elites more wholeheartedly entwined Blackness with laziness and a need for White direction in order to justify the appallingly murderous forced-labour, convict-leasing system upon which rested the South's industrialisation and its continuing plantation economy.

Perhaps the earliest elite ideological need into which laziness figured was the elites' differentiation of themselves from the populations they wished to exploit for labour. Pre-Revolution planters assumed an ideological posture that stressed their own "Protestant work ethic," an industriousness aimed at self-improvement for the glory of God, which ethic they denied was possessed by their mix of dependent, racialised labourers: Black slaves, White indentured servants, and Native American servants.³⁵⁸ To ensure the continued importation of "heretic" Scottish and Irish peasants as well as "vagrant" or criminal Englishmen, and to justify the restrictions that planters imposed on their mix of racialised labourers so as to render them more exploitable—restrictions on their access to education, marriage, and leisure—White elites claimed that "under severe masters they may be brought to goodness."³⁵⁹ Hence from the beginning of the colonial era White elites ideologically constructed laziness as a religious failing and work ethic as a trait that was taught and acquired rather than inborn. This popular outlook allowed proslavery discourse to resist wholly imputing Black slaves with a natural, racial laziness.

That is not to say that there was not some movement in this direction in early proslavery discourse. W.E.B. Du Bois, for instance, argued that racialised laziness developed as a stereotype out of White elites' reaction to the work culture of Africa.

³⁵⁸ On the Protestant work ethic, which many historians insist was very real, see: Jones 1999, 10-5; Genovese 1974, 285-8; Du Bois [1924] 1968, 53-4. On the mixed labour of early plantations, see: Hayes 2013; Jones 1998, esp. 31-9, 46-54.

³⁵⁹ "Poor Children to be Sent to Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 6 (Jan. 1899): 232 (as cited and quoted in Jones 1999, 26)

Black slaves, he wrote, were imbued with “a sensuous receptivity to the beauty of the world” that ensured they were “not as easily reduced to be the mechanical draft-horse which the northern European laborer became.” Where the Protestant labourer had found religious and moral purpose in steady toil, the Black slave was “not easily brought to recognize any ethical sanctions in work as such but tended to work as the results pleased him and refused to work or sought to refuse when he did not find the spiritual returns adequate; thus he was easily accused of laziness and driven as a slave.”³⁶⁰ There is much wisdom in this viewpoint. Evidently real cultural differences provoked the Europeans’ discourse of difference concerning the Black work ethic, and slaveholders who unabashedly admitted to hard driving would marshal Blacks’ supposed laziness as their excuse for it. Well into the 18th century, however, Whites were not yet united in castigating the whole Black ‘race’ as naturally lazy, and where a real difference in work ethic did not exist, Whites were willing to recognize similarity and praise Black communities that seemed to share White Christians’ attachment to toil. This is especially evident in travelogues describing the coast of Guinea.³⁶¹

This tension between ethical and racial laziness continued throughout the 19th century, and proslavery ideologues would make recourse to whichever of the laziness constructs suited their immediate ideological needs. When the need was to justify the whipping and driving of slaves, as Du Bois alluded, laziness was construed as an essential racial

³⁶⁰ Du Bois [1924] 1968, 53-4; Genovese 1974, 289, 303-4, 309-12. Charles Joyner similarly asserts that Black slaves did not give up many of their cultural work patterns, and planters’ imposition of the task system was modified through negotiation with the slaves’ culturally embedded, primarily “cooperative-” and “subsistence-based” notions of work (Joyner 1984, 57-9). Cf. P. Wood 1974, 60-2.

³⁶¹ Like Menander and Herodas, White travellers to Africa used work ethic as a means of distinguishing between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ people, judgements they did not extend to a whole class or the whole African population. Sc. Bosman 1705, 117, 199, 342-3; W. Smith 1745, 195: concerning *Fida/Whydah* Smith wrote that “All here are naturally industrious, and find constant Employment, the Men in Agriculture and the Women in Spinning and Weaving Cotton. ... The imaginary Beauty of the Elysian Fields cannot surpass the real Beauty of this Country.”

element of Blackness, and whipping as a necessity to induce any and all Black folk to work. This is the ideological strategy that Olmsted found expressed in an interview with an Alabama slave owner: “They is so monstrous lazy; they won't do no work, you know, less you are clus to 'em all the time, and I don't feel like it. I couldn't, at my time of life, begin a-using the lash; and you know they do have to take that, all on 'em--and a heap on't, sometimes.” Without the White application of the lash, this and other planters claimed, Black men and women would forgo work entirely: “It wouldn't do no good to free 'em, and let 'em hang round, because they is so monstrous lazy; if they hadn't got nobody to take keer on 'em, you see they wouldn't do nothin' but juss nat'rally laze round, and steal, and pilfer, and no man couldn't live, you see, war they was.”³⁶² Even free Black slaveholders suffered such a stereotype. In Louisiana Olmsted was told, in contradiction to his own observations, that Black slaveholders “were a lazy, beastly set... no order or discipline on their plantations, but everything going to ruin.” The propagators of this counter-factual rumour, Olmsted reasoned, must have picked it up from proslavery periodicals like *De Bow's Review* and simply regurgitated its propaganda without any investigation into its truth.³⁶³ This is a testament to many Whites' desire to accept anti-Black rhetoric at face value so long as it conformed to their notions of supremacy, a significant aspect of which was that all Black folk belonged in slavery because White control and driving was necessary to combat their inborn, racial laziness.

An arguably more powerful aspect of White slaveholders' justificatory ideology was that their ‘peculiar institution’ was a ‘positive good’, that is, as a system which benefitted

³⁶² Olmsted [1856] 1968, 572-3. Cf. J.H. Ingraham, *South-West*, II, 124 (as quoted and cited by Genovese 1974, 299): “Slaves in their present moral condition, if emancipated, would be lazzaroni in everything but colour.”

³⁶³ *Ibid.* 633.

both masters and slaves.³⁶⁴ A favourite claim of planters was that their benevolent management of slave labour, by incentivising work through ‘generous’ rations and assurances of life-long care, Christianised the Black slaves, and with respect to laziness this meant that they imbued Black folk with the Protestant work ethic and made them industrious. In travelogues, treatises, and novels slaveholders thus resisted the image of the lazy Black slave. For example, In George Tucker’s *Valley of Shenandoah* the New Yorker visiting the plantation remarks, “I have often heard that the labour of a slave, was but half that of a freeman, yet I scarcely think that I ever saw our stoutest and most active labourers work more willingly, or with better effect, than these bondsmen of yours.” The young planter Edward Grayson replies, “On a well regulated estate, on which the slaves have been properly brought up and well managed, their labour... differs little from that of freemen.”³⁶⁵ Tucker’s combat of juxtaposing free and slave work ethics signals how free labour advocates had begun to frame the debate over labour efficiency. Slaveholders claimed that their “well managed” slaves laboured assiduously, whereas free peoples, left to their own devices, did not and corrupted the slaves’ work ethic by their example.³⁶⁶ Free labour advocates claimed precisely the opposite: slavery not only depressed wages and rendered independent small plot farming uncompetitive, but also closed most free labourers’ ability to join the ‘middle’ mechanic class and made them feel degraded for

³⁶⁴ On the proslavery argument that slavery is a ‘positive good’, see: Miller 1996, 132.

³⁶⁵ Tucker [1824] 1970, 1.67-8. Cf. Clay 1833, esp. 15 & 22, where the treatise’s advice for incentivising slave labour closely resembles Xenophon’s advice in the *Oeconomicus* (13.9-12). Cf. travelogues: “Georgia. Extract of a letter from a gentleman on a tour of business in the Southern Country, to the editors of the Nat. Intelligencer,” *Boston Recorder* 2 (20 May, 8, 15 July 1817): 94, 122, 126 (as excerpted in Schwaab and Bull 1973, 1.145) Cf. G.S.S., “Sketches of the South Santee,” *American Monthly Magazine* 8 (October, November 1836): 313-19, 431-42 (as excerpted in Schwaab and Bull 1973, 1.9ff); G.M., “South-Carolina,” *New England Magazine* 1 (September, October 1831): 246-50, 337-41 (as excerpted in Schwaab and Bull 1973, 1.234), in which slaves literally go the extra mile in their work for Whites: “In riding, I have often known boys of fifteen and upwards run by my side for miles to open the gates.”

³⁶⁶ The free people most commonly attacked for their corrupting laziness were the Irish. Sc. Tucker [1824] 1970, 1.55-8; Eastman 1852, 73-4, 218. For a detailed discussion, see: Genovese 1974, 298.

sharing in ‘slavish’ work.³⁶⁷ That slavery would have the psychological effect of rendering free workers disgusted with menial labour is too complex an issue to address at length in this paper.³⁶⁸ The accuracy of each position is also beside the point of this paper, and it will not be addressed more than in passing. It is more significant for my argument that both the proslavery and pro-free labour lines of reasoning construct laziness as taught and transferable rather than racial.

In Louisiana Olmsted interviewed a plantation owner, dubbed Mr. R, who well encapsulated the proslavery line of reasoning. Mr. R hated that the free White Acadians who owned small plots bordering on his plantation did not press themselves to constantly toil after profits, but instead happily subsisted on their small farms. They were “lazy vagabonds, doing but little work, and spending much time in shooting, fishing, and play.” He confessed to a desire to buy up all of their property and banish them from the country,

³⁶⁷ For a study of the North-South wage gap, see Margo 2000, esp. 155: “The South also lagged behind the North in real wage growth. As a result, there emerged a real wage gap for common labor favouring the North in the 1830s. ... Although the North-South wage gap narrowed somewhat in the 1850s, the low-wage South was already a feature of the American economy before the Civil War.”

³⁶⁸ Over the last two centuries many scholars have claimed that proximity to slavery greatly disturbed free labourers and that these labourers were ingrained with the upper class’ snobbish view of all manual labour as degrading. W.E.B. Du Bois: “Slavery bred in the poor white a dislike of Negro toil of all sorts. He never regarded himself as a laborer, or as part of any labor movement. If he had any ambition at all it was to become a planter and to own ‘niggers.’” (Du Bois 1935, 12) Cf. Genovese 1974, 296. For this view relating to slavery across cultures or in ancient Greece, see: Engels [1894] 1987, 631-2; Patterson 1982, 34; E. E. Cohen 2000, 141-2; Scheidel 2002. I am very much opposed to this view, and find the conflicting theory of G.E.M. de St. Croix and others far more convincing: “It would be absurd to suggest that the lower classes as a whole dutifully accepted the social snobbery and contempt for the ‘banausic’ that prevailed among the well-to-do. Many Greeks... were evidently proud of their skills and felt that they acquired dignity by the exercise of them.” (de Ste Croix, 1981, p. 274). Cf. E. M. Wood 1988, 137ff. The primary evidences for the ancient Greek context are proud inscriptions and signatures left by artisans (IG II² 3780; IG II² 4334; IG II² 6320; IG II² 10051; IG II² 11659; IG I³ 1361), as well as positive references to citizen labouring in court speeches and Plutarch’s remarks on Solon’s invitation to citizenship for all families immigrating to Athens so as to ply a trade (Demosthenes 42.20; Plutarch *Life of Solon* 22.1-24.2). For the American context, a similar proud workman culture can be discerned in the appropriate, working class sources such as ‘work songs’ (Siegmeister 1944; P. S. Foner 1975; R. D. Cohen 2010), Workingmen’s Association speeches (Wilson 1860), workers’ petitions to courts (abstracts hosted by the University of North Carolina, searchable by Petition Analysis Record Number at <http://goo.gl/xd3znL>; sc. PAR #11382222, 11382813, 11586101, 11382009, 11385801, 11283107, 11285609, & 11280206), and the documented historical process by which White labourers displaced slaves from many unskilled and skilled professions rather than avoiding them as ‘slavish’ (Wade 1964, 273-5; Goldin 1976).

because “they demoralized his negroes. The slaves seeing them living in apparent comfort, without much property and without steady labor, could not help thinking that it was not necessary for men to work so hard as they themselves were obliged to; that if they were free they would not need to work.”³⁶⁹ For an example of free labour advocacy that similarly stressed that laziness was not inborn but instead a transferable habit, the view of Olmsted himself is instructive.

He is resolute that slave laziness could be attributed to two factors: a lack of incentives which prompted resistance, and planters’ lack of attention to the education of their slaves. Olmsted had a knack for finding slaveholders who would admit that indeed their slaves worked lazily not because of any natural predilection for sloth, but because they lacked incentive to do otherwise. Using slaveholders’ words strengthened the rhetorical impact of this criticism of the slave system. In Petersburg, Virginia, for example, Olmsted watched a gang of slaves deliver bricks to a building’s construction site, during the course of which “a Northern man, standing near, remarked to him that they moved so indolently it seemed as if they were trying to see how long they could be in mounting the ladder without actually stopping.” The builder at first moved to reproach the slaves, but then reconsidered. “What motive have they to do better?” he remarked. “It’s no concern of theirs how long the masons wait. I am sure, if I was in their place, I shouldn’t move as fast as they do.”³⁷⁰ This was significantly non-racial logic to fall from the lips of a

³⁶⁹ Olmsted [1856] 1968, 673-4. William Caruthers is a notable exception among American slaveholders, in that he totally broke from this ideological position and boldly claimed that slavery undermined free Southern labourers’ ability to rise out of poverty by rendering their work uncompetitive, and so it caused their lack of motivation to work past the point of subsistence. Sc. Caruthers 1834, 1.76-81.

³⁷⁰ Olmsted [1856] 1968, 210. This is an instance where, as Eugene Genovese put it, “occasionally, masters interpreted the facts realistically.” Cf. Charles Pettigrew’s slaveholding advice included in his will: “Let this consideration plead in their favor, and at all time [sic] mitigate your resentments. They are slaves for life. They are not stimulated to care and industry as white people are, who labor for themselves. They do not feel *interested* in what they do, for arbitrary masters and mistresses, and their education is not such as can be

Southern slaveholder. His slaves were ‘lazy’ because they were resisting work in which they had no sufficient stake to motivate them, not because of a natural, racial defect, and he imagined anyone, White or Black, would act accordingly in the same circumstance.³⁷¹

While Olmsted occasionally fell into castigating Black folk for a moral failure to “toil,” he at least spared slaves of complete blame and directed more of it at their typical educational regimen.³⁷² He wrote that paternalistic management of slaves could remedy the problem. In Virginia, he explained that, unlike how White elites had inculcated a work ethic into their children early on, planters did not do the same with slave children. Rather, they left these children alone until they were old enough to do worthwhile labour, and so in their childhood they received “no training to application or method, but only to idleness and carelessness.” He claimed, in oddly idyllic terms, that “The only whipping of slaves that I have seen in Virginia, has been of these wild, lazy children, as they are being broke in to work. ... They cannot be depended upon a minute out of sight.”³⁷³ At first glance this description is similar to that of Topsy in Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, but there is an important distinction to be made. Topsy’s resistance of Miss Ophelia’s tasks is racialised as Black, heathen ‘shiftlessness’ since both Ophelia and Topsy’s previous owners fail to inculcate a work ethic into her regardless of the chore regimens, Bible

expected to inspire them with sentiments of honor and gratitude...” Charles Pettigrew, *Last Advice of the Rev. Charles Pettigrew to His Sons*, copy of pamphlet in the Pettigrew Papers (as cited and quoted by Genovese 1974, 303)

³⁷¹ To my mind, this has a surprisingly Aristophanic logic: no one wants to do unpleasant jobs for little reward. That the American slaveholder comes to this conclusion by way of imagining himself in the slaves’ position perhaps signals that, as ancient evidence suggests, Athenian free and slave workers so often worked the same jobs that they easily imagined themselves in each other’s “place,” fomenting the Aristophanic stereotype that slaves and citizens were equally lazy.

³⁷² For one of his denigrating, moralising descriptions of slave laziness/resistance, see: Olmsted [1856] 1968, 208-11.

³⁷³ Olmsted [1856] 1968, 146

studies, and beatings that they assign to her.³⁷⁴ Only Eva's injunction that Topsy will not get to see her again in heaven unless she follows all of the Whites' orders convinces or rather converts the slave girl to fight her natural 'wicked' impulses.³⁷⁵ Olmsted, on the other hand, is resolute that Blacks' lack of work ethic is a part of "the indolent, careless, incogitant habits so formed in youth," which the planters should but do not "systematically" attempt to eradicate. The slaves' teenage years, because they toil without proper monetary or personal incentives, "continue to act upon a slave in the same direction, cultivating every quality at variance with industry, precision, forethought, and providence." These cultivated, rather than natural, habits then influence "the whole industrial character of the [Southern] people. You may see it in the habits and manners of

³⁷⁴ To be totally fair to Stowe, St. Clare and Miss Ophelia do agree that the slave "system makes such children," (p. 2.46) but this making has nothing to do with the educatory regimen imposed upon slaves. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* does not clearly elaborate on the subject of how the 'peculiar institution' makes Topsies, so Stowe's *Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* must be considered. In this text, the primary driver for making 'wicked' slaves like Topsy is the system's imposition of "the utter hopelessness of rising above" slave status, "a state of things which takes away every stimulant which God meant should operate healthfully on the human mind." (p. 1.91) White children, on the other hand, have careers to look forward to, so impressing upon them a work ethic and desire for learning is easy, according to Stowe. Curiously, her novel, through the inventor-slave character of George Harris, presents plantation slavery as leaving room for 'healthful' careers that require education, and it is fair to say that a select few of real plantation slaves were allowed to climb into privileged positions requiring some education, such as estates' blacksmiths, carpenters, drivers, etc. Such opportunities were not open to all slaves, but Stowe's total disregard for this class of slave in her defensive *Key* is rhetorical. I believe it signals that she was uncomfortable with her novel's exposition on Topsy, similar to her discomfort with her colonisation ending, and it is meant to lessen the severity of her novel's description of Eva and Topsy: "They stood the representatives of their races. The Saxon, born of ages of cultivation, command, education, physical and moral eminence; the Afric, born of ages of oppression, submission, ignorance, toil and vice!" (p. 2.43) Here, Stowe's racism is not entirely deterministic—Topsy after all overcomes her resistance to the Protestant work ethic eventually—but slaves' "submission, ignorance... and vice" are still understood to be inbred after "ages" of degradation, which stands at odds with the *Key's* insistence that only the 'career incentive' is lacking for slaves, and that this incentive is Whites' only advantage. It is regrettable that Stowe wrote her immensely popular novel before doing the research which informed her revised opinions in the *Key*.

³⁷⁵ Popular black-face minstrel songs immediately put the Topsy character to use, and they drive home that Topsy's laziness (and resistance) are racial characteristics. *Little Topsy's Song* (1853) by Eliza Cook and Asa Hutchinson encapsulates this nicely. Before Eva's religious indoctrination of Topsy, the choruses read: "This is Topsy's savage song / Topsy's cute and clever, / Hurrah then for the white man's right / Slavery forever!" After Eva's religious instruction, Topsy is still 'wicked' but has been convinced to fight against that inborn wickedness: "I knows I'se wicked, but I'll try / And be all good to you." The chorus then changes: "This is Topsy's human song / Under love's endeavor, / Hurrah then for the white child's work / Humanity forever!" For the song's lyrics and a modern recording of it, see the University of Virginia's website: <http://goo.gl/ohiRCL>.

the free white mechanics and trades-people,” who “must have dealings or be in competition with slaves.”³⁷⁶ In positing that planters *could have* raised slaves to have a strong work ethic for their masters’ work, Olmsted’s views come close to aligning with those of proslavery ideologues who trumpeted slavery as a ‘positive good’. In both antebellum proslavery and pro-free labour ideological discourses laziness was a transferable vice and industriousness a teachable virtue. Laziness became more specifically entwined with Blackness after the Civil War, once planters had less of a need for the ‘positive good’ ideology and those exploiting Black labour more murderously than during the antebellum period required, in a greater degree, justification for their driving of ‘slaves by another name’.

Generally the antebellum, transferable work ethic logics operated similarly to how ancient Greek authors like Menander and Herodas moralised about laziness: as a rubric by which to distinguish between good and bad people regardless of free or slave status, since everyone was thought capable of industriousness. Some simply rejected that potential. There is an important difference, however, in that the Greek poets fairly readily show lowly characters judging the rich land and slaveholders for their laziness. In Menander’s *Dyskolos*, for instance, a poor farmer and his industrious slave criticise the young and wealthy suitor Sostratos for his *σχολήν* (leisure), and he humorously fails to perform long in the field in his attempt to prove them wrong.³⁷⁷ Antebellum proslavery ideologues, by contrast, did not readily admit that their lives were ones of leisure. The mistress Lucretia of Kennedy’s *Swallow Barn* is a paragon of household industry, for example, and Olmsted interviewed planters who smilingly assured him that “a farmer’s

³⁷⁶ Olmsted [1856] 1968, 146-7

³⁷⁷ Sostratos attacked for leisure: Menander *Dyskolos* 294; his humour failing at farm labour: lines 522-45.

life, in this country, is no sinecure,” so often are they forced to direct and correct their slaves’ labour.³⁷⁸

After the Civil War, when the South was nominally shifting to a free labour system, attacks on the work ethic of free Black folk took on a new importance. Ex-slaveholders no longer had as strong a need for the idea that Black men and women happily and industriously worked for benevolent masters. What they needed was cheap, steady, immobile, and expendable labour. This transition in outlook is well captured by an editorial published in 1865: “Under the new system the planter will hire only such as are willing and able to work—and when we say work, we mean work in earnest, and not the half play and half work to which many of the slaves have been accustomed. That has ‘played out’—they will now have to work like white men.”³⁷⁹ This view that Black folk were accustomed to “half play” rather than steady labour paved the way for most states’ imposition of “Black Codes,” a significant portion of which was aimed at forcing Black labourers into work contracts with their former owners. The freedmen could not be trusted, argued segregationist ideologues, to work at all without the control of White men. The Black Code laws forbade most interstate travel for Blacks, required self-employed Blacks to acquire special licences and pay special taxes, required all Blacks to carry proof of housing, and required them to enter into year-long labour contracts within the first

³⁷⁸ Olmsted [1856] 1968, 44. Olmsted was not one to believe the hype: “The greater the class distinctions, the more general will be the habit of lazy contemplation and reflection--of dilettantism--and the less that of practical industry and the capacity for laborious personal observation and invention. The South Carolina gentleman is ambitious to generalize, either in war, or in politics, or in society; but to closely superintend and carry out his own plans, is excessively irksome and difficult for him. . . . It is not enough, that he should exercise a sort of general superintendence. That may save him from speedy ruin, and perhaps, even enable him to get along tolerably well; but, if he desires really to improve, he must descend to particulars, and infuse into every plantation operation the spirit of an intelligent guardian of a permanent interest. How much better, then, would everything be conducted, if the planter himself took upon him the steady, uniform, and entire direction of all his affairs, and pursued a system of his own, even in the smallest matters, for a series of years.” (Ibid. 516-7)

³⁷⁹ *Southern Watchman*, May 31, 1865 (as quoted and cited by Genovese 1974, 300)

week of a new year as well as to carry written proof of this employment. In most states Blacks were obligated to offer their services first to their ex-owners, and they were barred from leaving this employment without written permission from the employer, ensuring no poaching of labourers by other employers. Officers were tasked with returning runaway or quitting workers back to the employer. Furthermore, conduct such as fighting, cruelly treating animals, trespassing, “malicious mischief,” “seditious speeches,” insulting Whites, acting as a minister without a licence, and selling liquor was all made illegal for Black folk. Failure to comply with these laws was met with specific fines ranging from \$10 to \$100, or a charge of vagrancy, and the codes either stipulated imprisonment as extra punishment or for failure to pay these fines, upon which were added various court, sheriff, and attorney fees.³⁸⁰ Jails would then lease out many of these convicts to industrial employers who could literally work them to death while most Americans’ consciences were kept clear by their wilfully believing that only ‘bad’, slothful Black folk were convicted of vagrancy and that their immoral laziness was cured by the White-controlled chain gangs.³⁸¹ As with the other stereotypes discussed in this paper, Black laziness in the post-war era was shaped and reinforced by the conditions in which Black folk were forced to live.

The necessity of this ‘slavery by another name’ and of the paramilitary war waged by Whites against the freed Black folk was arduously defended by proslavery or segregationist ideologues after their implementation. They claimed these were the only options which were left to the White South in order to evade total economic and political ruin at the hands of the lazy Blacks. Senator Ben Tillman, for example, defended his own

³⁸⁰ Du Bois 1935, 168-80

³⁸¹ Blackmon 2008, 57, 124, 393-4

and others' violent imposition of the Jim Crow caste system on the grounds that Black liberty had brought the South to the precipice of irreversible economic disaster, because without the control of White slaveholders "there was no incentive to labor" for Blacks.³⁸² Black laziness quickly became the scapegoat for the beleaguered economy of the post-war South. "They were the cause of wasted property and small crops," Du Bois wrote from the point of view of segregationist ideologues, and "they had impoverished the South, and plunged the North into endless debt."³⁸³ Through propaganda such as this the laziness stereotype became increasingly racialised and woven into Blackness during the Jim Crow era in a manner it had not in the antebellum period. Southern planters and industrialists needed ideological justification for their new, oppressive forced-labour regime, and they staked that justification largely on Black laziness. This regime did not need the benevolent veneer that slaveholders had cultivated, so segregationist ideologues did away with the lines of argument that stressed slaveholders' role in Christianising Blacks and instilling them with the Protestant work ethic. Focus was returned to racial laziness that stressed the necessity of White control over Black labourers, lest their laziness bring the country's economy to a grinding halt.

III. 'Criminality'

i. Jezebel: Black Women's Sexuality and Sexual Exploitation

"It is obvious that the two forces, sexism and racism, intensified and magnified the sufferings and oppressions of black women," writes the ground-breaking social activist

³⁸² *Congressional Record*, Vol. 41, Cong. 59, Sess. 2, p. 1440; Simkins 1964, 394.

³⁸³ Du Bois 1935, 125. Cf. Thomas Dixon's *The Clansman*, in which he described the results of emancipation in such terms: "The plow stopped in the furrow, the hoe was dropped, and the millennium was at hand. Negro tenants... stopped work, and rode their landlords' mules and horses around the county. ... the loss to the cotton crop alone from the abandonment of the growing plant was estimated at over \$60,000,000." (Dixon 1905, 244)

and historian bell hooks. “The black female was exploited as a labourer in the fields, a worker in the domestic household, a breeder, and as an object of white male sexual assault.”³⁸⁴ This section of the chapter is concerned specifically with how White slaveholding elites facilitated their sexual exploitation and terrorism of Black women by forcing them into conditions at odds with the White American conception of female decency, by denying them the ability to resist this treatment, but then stereotyping them as willing, even instigating participants.³⁸⁵ White male elites wielded racism and sexism to develop propaganda about Black women’s sexuality that exculpated White male predation and suppressed others’ ability to empathise with the enslaved women, because the White patriarchy inculcated Americans with Christian ‘morality’ which “taught them that women were the seducers of men, [so] they believed black women were not totally blameless.”³⁸⁶ Black women strongly desired to live according to the Victorian standards of sexual propriety, but they were often humiliatingly robbed of the ability to do so by White planters.³⁸⁷ Slaveholders’ constant stripping and sexual assault of these women not

³⁸⁴ hooks 1981, 22. There is a virtually inexhaustible body of feminist and feminist ally scholarship which combats the dehumanising Black female images, like Jezebel and Mammy, born from the ‘double bind’ of racism and sexism, and which also works to vitiate White racists’ dehumanisation of Black men. The intersectional understanding of race and gender was spearheaded by ex-slaves and early Civil Rights activists such as Sojourner Truth, Harriet Jacobs, and Ida B. Wells (Truth [1850] 1997, Jacobs 1861, Wells 1995, Wells 1997). Contemporary work in this field includes: Brownmiller 1975, Gutman 1975, Clinton 1982, Jones 1985, D. G. White 1985, Jewell 1993, Sommerville 1995, K. M. Brown 1996, Sommerville 1997, Hodes 1997, Clinton and Gillespie 1997, Collins 2002, Collins 2004, Morgan 2004, Altink 2005, Hobson 2005, Jordan-Lake 2005, Wallace-Sanders 2008, Glymph 2008, Feimster 2009, Spear 2009, B. Wood 2011, & Green 2011.

³⁸⁵ On the use of rape as terrorism and a means of social control, see: hooks 1981, 18-20, 24-30, 37; D. G. White 1985, 162-5; Jones 1985, 20, 37-8; Collins 2002, 32, 135ff; Feagin 2006, 59-60, 74-5.

³⁸⁶ hooks 1981, 33, 37

³⁸⁷ Consider the account of Harriet Jacobs: “Do not judge the poor desolate slave girl too severely! ...I wanted to keep myself pure; and, under the most adverse circumstances, I tried hard to preserve my self-respect; but I was struggling alone in the powerful grasp of the demon Slavery; and the monster proved too strong for me. I felt as if I was forsaken by God and man; as if all my efforts must be frustrated; and I became reckless in my despair. ...The condition of slavery confuses all principles of morality, and, in fact, renders the practice of them impossible.” (Jacobs 1861, 69-70) The same passage notes that her mistress had spread gossip in the neighbourhood about Jacob’s sexual activity, as though she were responsible.

only worked to demoralise and “communicate power” over them, but also criminalised them, for all prenuptial sexual activity was explicitly illegal in the colonies until well into the 18th century.³⁸⁸ Slaveholders forced Black women to live criminalised lives, the emotional and physical pressures of which constrained their and their husbands’ efforts to maintain the integrity of their families.³⁸⁹

The auction block was a prime location for the production of propaganda about Black women’s hyper-sexuality. As the ex-slave John Brown explains, “flopping”—beating with a paddle—was regularly inflicted on men, women, and children in the slave pens, but it was exacted with special vigour on those slaves who failed to appear “bright and smart” to potential buyers. A slave might be “physically faultless in every respect, yet their value be impaired by a sour look, or a dull, vacant stare, or a general dullness of demeanour. For this reason the poor wretches who are about to be sold, are instructed to look ‘spry and smart:’ to hold themselves well up, and put on a smiling, cheerful countenance.”³⁹⁰ The ribaldry at which enslaved Black women were so often forced to smile was typically vicious. In 1859, the *Anti-Slavery Reporter* reprinted a detailed, albeit sanitised chronicle of the ‘Great Slave-Auction in Georgia’ highlighting the many men in

³⁸⁸ K. M. Brown 1996, 189, 333, 199: “Very few white men were prosecuted... none was punished.” On the criminalisation of Black women’s lives, consider how Frederick Douglass frames their sexual exploitation not as rape but as prostitution: “a million women, in the Southern States of this Union, are... consigned to the revolting life of prostitution” (as quoted in Brownmiller 1975, 168).

³⁸⁹ On the Herculean efforts of Black slaves, and especially Black women, to protect the integrity of their families, see: Jones 1985, 31-9; Gutman 1975, 133-43, and also see his discussion of “swap-dog kin:” 185ff; but consider Deborah White’s soft critique of Gutman’s statistical approach to arguing for the integrity of slave families: “Statistics on long-lived slave marriages must be approached with caution. The length of a slave marriage does not necessarily indicate how voluntary it was, nor the circumstances under which it occurred.” (D. G. White 1985, 149ff)

³⁹⁰ J. Brown 1855, 115-7: “When spoken to, they must reply quickly, with a smile on their lips, though agony is in their heart, and the tear trembling in their eye. They must answer every question, and do as they are bid, to show themselves off; dance, jump, walk, leap, squat, tumble, and twist about, that the buyer may see they have no stiff joints, or other physical defect.”

attendance who showered the for-sale women with sexual insults.³⁹¹ When a slave woman came onto the stage wearing a shawl, White men began to shout: “Pull off her rags and let us see her!”³⁹² Forcing women to remain “bright” while they were bombarded with such sexualising remarks had not just an immediate economic benefit in securing the women’s sale, but it also presented slave women to onlookers as enjoying their sexualisation. The South Carolinian diarist Mary Boykin Chesnut, for example, fell for the deception and breathed life into this always-sexually-available stereotype when she briefly related her observation of a slave auction, in which she described that a ‘fancy maid’ who “was magnificently gotten up in silks and satins” seduced the bidders. “She seemed delighted with it all, sometimes ogling the bidders, sometimes looking quiet, coy, and modest, but her mouth never relaxed from its expanded grin of excitement.”³⁹³ This instigating, temptress stereotype provided slaveholders with a justification that assuaged their guilt and masked that they were in fact regularly coercing enslaved women into sexual activity, often violently and as a means of social control.³⁹⁴ As Deborah White

³⁹¹ *The Anti-Slavery Reporter*, May 2nd, 1859, p. 112

³⁹² Ibid. 114. There then followed a “loud chorus of similar remarks, emphasized with loud profanity, and mingled with sayings too indecent and too obscene to be even hinted at here.” When a pair of newly-wed slaves was brought out, the journalist explained that “their appearance was the signal for a volley of coarse jokes from the auctioneer, and of ribald remarks from the surrounding crowd.” This entire account stands in stark contrast to how slave auctions were presented in antebellum plantation novels. In George Tucker’s *Valley of Shenandoah*, for example, the auction’s stock is being sold for the same reason—an old family’s estate is to be broken up—but the fictional auctioneer “had direction to dwell awhile, whenever a slave was about to be sold to a master they did not like.” In fact, when a “likely mulatto girl” is put on the block and horn-dog bidders raise her price past what her husband’s owner can afford, the auctioneer arranges to have a man buy the girl and sell her back to the husband’s owner on generous credit. The only man to make an inappropriate joke about the mulatto girl’s sexual availability is immediately chastised by the surrounding planters. Even when a husband and wife themselves agree to be sold separately, because the husband caught the wife “in an infidelity with little Tom,” the bidding planters band together to convince the pair to reconcile, and they too are bought as a family unit. Tucker caps the scene off by writing: “There was no separation of husbands from wives, or mothers from young children.” (Tucker [1824] 1970, 2.206-11)

³⁹³ Chesnut 1905, 17

³⁹⁴ Consider the account of ex-slave Henry Bibb on the violent coercion of a Black woman into a sexual relationship with a White man: “I heard the Deacon tell one of the slave girls, that he had bought her for a wife for his boy Stephen, which office he compelled her fully to perform against her will. This he enforced

explains, whenever enslaved women, hoping for better treatment, “took the risk involved and offered themselves,” White elites warped their actions into ‘proof’ that the women invited and wanted their White masters’ predation, and that therefore Black women were not being raped. The women, trapped in the elites’ rigged social system, “fulfilled the prophecy of their lustfulness.”³⁹⁵ Even abolitionists internalised and parroted this stereotype. For instance, James Redpath, while engaging in a diatribe against the sexual coercion of enslaved women, indulged in this racist image: “Mulatto women almost always refuse to cohabit with the blacks... but are gratified by the criminal advances of Saxons, whose intimacy, they hope, may make them the mothers of children almost white—which is the quadroon girl’s ambition.”³⁹⁶

This racial stereotype was spurred on by the widespread use of enslaved women as concubines.³⁹⁷ The sight of so many Black women with White ‘lovers’ helped to reinforce in the White imagination ideas about Black women’s insatiability, scheming for

by a threat. At first the poor girl neglected to do this, having no sort of affection for the man—but she was finally forced to it by an application of the driver’s lash, as threatened by the Deacon.” (Bibb 1849, 112) This coercion was not reserved for recently-bought women. Harriet Jacobs describes how her master began to coerce her when she reached puberty: “He told me I was his property; that I must be subject to his will in all things. ...Dr. Flint swore he would kill me, if I was not as silent as the grave.” (Jacobs 1861, 34-5)

³⁹⁵ D. G. White 1985, 34, 38. Cf. Jordan 1968, 151. This inviting of White rape trope has a long pedigree, beginning in travellers’ accounts of Africa. According to Jean Barbot, a French merchant living in England from 1685 until his death in 1713, these “hot and lascivious” Black women make “no scruple to prostitute themselves to Europeans for a very slender profit, so great is their inclination to white men.” (Barbot 1732, 34) Cf. The English surveyor William Smith: “These Royal *Negroes* Royal Ladies do their utmost to gratify this Passion, and often twenty of them seize a lusty Youth, and detain him till his Strength is quite exhausted.” (W. Smith 1745, 223) “In *Guinea* you never hear of a Rape, and the Reason is plain, the young Ladies are not taught by the Priests, that the Gratification of their darling Passion is a damnable Crime... [and they] make no Scruple, if they have but the Opportunity to meet the embraces of a Man.” (Ibid. 246-7) Cf. Bosman 1705, 206.

³⁹⁶ Redpath 1859, 141: “Is it likely, then, that a young man will resist temptation, when it comes in the form of a beautiful slave maiden, who has perhaps—as is often the case—a fairer complexion than his own, and an exquisitely handsome figure? It is neither likely, nor *so!*” Cf. Schoepf [1788] 1911, 101: “In almost every house there are negresses who count it an honor to bring a mulatto into the world.”

³⁹⁷ D. G. White 1985, 34; hooks 1981, 33-4

new lovers, and preference for White men.³⁹⁸ A Louisiana planter interviewed by Frederick Law Olmsted claimed that “there is not a likely looking black girl in this state that is not the paramour of a white man.”³⁹⁹ Most purchases of concubines were not intended to be permanent. Many slaveholders passed their concubines around their friend group, and should an enslaved Black woman fall afoul of her owner’s desires, he readily discarded her and replaced her with a new “fancy maid.”⁴⁰⁰ Such turnovers reinforced the stereotype of Black women’s constantly willing availability, which slaveholders used to excuse their sexual exploitation and assault of slaves. Even plantation novels, usually so sanitised that Black women feature in them as essentially sexless figures, toyed with the temptress stereotype, though the protagonists are invariably too Christian as to give into ‘sin’. Virtually the only mention of Black women in the anonymously written *Marly; or a Planter’s Life in Jamaica*, for example, features “glossy-skinned nymphs” trying to convince the White Marly to take them as concubines “like other buckras.”⁴⁰¹

Black women were not only hyper-sexualised through the justification for their sexual exploitation. “In the Victorian world, where white women were religiously covering every body part,” writes bell hooks, “black women were daily stripped of their clothing and publically whipped.”⁴⁰² Even this inflicted nudity denoted lewdness and lasciviousness to Whites,⁴⁰³ an attitude that was especially acute for Englishmen, who

³⁹⁸ It should be noted that Jezebel was not always portrayed as scheming specifically for extra White lovers. In Charles White’s minstrel ‘Olio’, *Oh, Hush! or, the Virginny Cupids*, Rose, a “fascinating wench,” strings along two Black men, offering “plenty applejack” to one when the other is away. When the men fight over her, she sides with the dandy who recently won the lottery. (C. White 2005, 159)

³⁹⁹ Olmsted [1856] 1968, 602

⁴⁰⁰ Baptist 2001, 1643-5; J. Brown 1855, 111: slaveholders “generally changed mistresses every week.”

⁴⁰¹ *Marly; or, a Planter’s Life in Jamaica* 1828, 133-4

⁴⁰² hooks 1981, 37

⁴⁰³ D. G. White 1985, 29; Jordan 1968, 161-2

had a long tradition of linking carnal sin to blackness.⁴⁰⁴ The public flogging of nude women satisfied slaveholders' desire to appear as sexually dominant. For example, Henry Bibb wrote that when his master grew angry at "a mulatto girl who waited about the house," he "stripped and tied her up," dropping "two hundred stripes on her naked quivering flesh, tied up and exposed to the public gaze of all."⁴⁰⁵ As Janell Hobson explains, many artists, even for abolitionist publications, saw an appeal in these expressions of sexual dominance, and they perpetuated Black female sexuality stereotypes by representing the punishments in pornographic images which unfailingly focus attention on slave women's exposed breasts and pitiful screaming "for the vicarious thrill of readers. ... Nudity and illicit sexuality thus cling to the victimized black female slave."⁴⁰⁶

Slaveholders utilised more than punishment to force slave women into exposing more of their bodies than was considered acceptably chaste by Victorian standards. Unlike the obsessively covered 'aristocratic' White women, whose bared ankles or wrists were enough to arouse "the ire of her husband and the contempt of her community," enslaved Black women were often inadequately clothed or put to tasks that required some

⁴⁰⁴ Winthrop Jordan posits George Best as paradigmatic of this belief. He quotes Best's account of the "curse of Cham/Ham" wherein Noah demanded that his sons "abstaine from carnall copulation with their wives," but his son Cham disobeyed, prompting God to 'curse' his progeny with black skin as a "spectacle of disobedience to all the worlde." (Jordan 1968, 40-3) Jordan is also fond of Shakespeare, especially his *Othello*, as reflecting (and critiquing) Elizabethan equations of blackness, the Devil, and sex. (p. 37-8) On the Curse of Ham, see also: Whitford 2009.

⁴⁰⁵ Bibb 1849, 112-3. Cf. Isaac William's slave narrative, in which he describes how his master, fearing that a "yellow girl" might run away, "tied her across the fence, naked, and whipped her severely with a paddle bored with holes, and with a switch. Then he shaved the hair off of one side of her head, and daubed cow-filth on the shaved part, to disgrace her—keep her down." (Williams 1856, 55-6) Cf. Nicols 1856, 71; Bibb 1849, 105.

⁴⁰⁶ Hobson 2005, 32-5. Cf. Morgan 2004, 14. As Morgan demonstrates, similarly pornographic images were included as plates in some illustrated copies of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, surely one of the reasons why Sigmund Freud reported in *A Child is Being Beaten* that his patients, through this novel, matured and built up their masturbatory beating fantasies.

exposure of their bodies.⁴⁰⁷ To go barefoot was common, especially on rice plantations where seed was stamped into the ground with the foot,⁴⁰⁸ but hiked up skirts were also a common necessity for work and an equally common prompt for observers' sexual imagination.⁴⁰⁹ For example, Olmsted indulged in erotic language to describe Black women with hiked up skirts and barely any skin exposed, when he observed a mostly-female gang of slaves tasked with repairing a road. Despite the women's makeshift "leggings," Olmsted cannot beat back his sexual thoughts, describing the women as "sly, sensual, and shameless... in all their expressions and demeanour"⁴¹⁰ Many slaveholders made a conscious effort to bare their female slaves at work. Lt. William Feltman, in his military journal, mentioned that often slaveholders "will have a number of blacks standing around them, all naked, nothing to hide their nakedness," and who "will attend their table in this manner in some households."⁴¹¹ The routine exposure of Black women's bodies, and Whites' insistence that this nudity and features of the bodies themselves signified a hyper-sexuality, 'produced difference' between Black and White women along racial lines and thereby reduced the likelihood that these two groups would see their commonality and unite against the White patriarchal order.⁴¹²

⁴⁰⁷ D. G. White 1985, 31-2

⁴⁰⁸ Joyner 1984, 46, 115-6

⁴⁰⁹ D. G. White 1985, 32-3

⁴¹⁰ Olmsted [1856] 1968, 387-8

⁴¹¹ Entry of June 22nd, 1781: Feltman 1853, 5

⁴¹² To my mind, the most extreme example of Whites manipulating Black women's nudity to castigate them as anatomically hyper-sexual is the exhibition of Sara (Saartjie) Baartman, the so-called "Hottentot Venus," throughout 19th century Europe in 'freak shows' as well as her representation in periodicals through sketches and cartoons. Both contexts wildly exaggerated the size of her buttocks as a racial and anatomical defect that they dubbed "steatopygia," which signified a "grotesque" degree of sexuality. Hobson 2005, esp. 35-47: "Excessive sexuality was... the biological sign embedded in Baartman's buttocks." Hobson also discusses frightful illustrations of Black women's bodies that, among other things, depict them with distended, phallic labia, which denotes their aggressive hyper-sexuality. (Ibid. 31ff)

This sexual ‘production of difference’ was also enacted through stereotypes of Black hyper-fertility, because, as Deborah White explains, “causal correlations have always been drawn between sexuality and fecundity.”⁴¹³ The prolific birthing of children by enslaved women served to reinforce stereotypes of their promiscuity, since, on the whole, planters encouraged the increase of their slave populations by purposefully ‘failing’ to enforce “restraints on slave sexual activity” or “standards of English morality.”⁴¹⁴ Olmsted’s interview with a Northern Mississippi planter is instructive both for how the planter has structured his estate to allow, or rather encourage, early and regular sexual liaisons between slaves, and for how he still considers the activity to reflect the natural promiscuity of Black folks.

“Niggers,” said he, “breed faster than white folks, a ’mazin’ sight, you know; they begin younger.”
 “How young do they begin?”
 “Sometimes at fourteen; sometimes at sixteen, and sometimes at eighteen.”
 “Do you let them marry so young as that?” I inquired. He laughed, and said, “they do n’t very often wait to be married.”⁴¹⁵

Olmsted found that this notion of Black women giving birth more often than White women carried equal currency in Virginia, a planter telling him that “he did not suppose there was a lot of women anywhere that bred faster than his; he never heard of babies coming so fast as they did on his plantation; it was perfectly surprising.”⁴¹⁶ While slaveholders obviously benefitted from the growth of their slave populations, many

⁴¹³ Hobson 2005, 29: “Visual exaggerations of African women’s bodies... create a monstrous hyper-woman... [who] seems to function as overly female compared with European women, and overly in abundance with regard to her femaleness.” Cf. Jordan 1968, 151, and the travellers’ accounts of Africa: W. Smith 1745, 211; Bosman 1705, 122; E. Long [1774] 2003, 380.

⁴¹⁴ Jordan 1968, 160-1

⁴¹⁵ Olmsted 1860, 153-4

⁴¹⁶ Olmsted [1856] 1968, 57

feigned exasperation at their slaves' carnal "impiety," especially when faced with anti-slavery criticism focused on owners' inability to imbue Black folks with 'Christian chastity'. The Church, rebutted the slaveholders, was no match for Black hyper-sexuality. So explained "an Alabama gentlemen" when Olmsted questioned him "with regard to the chastity of the so-called pious slaves," answering that "he did not know of more than one negro woman whom he could suppose to be chaste, yet he knew hosts who were members of churches."⁴¹⁷ It must be stressed that the increase of an estate's slaves was rarely due simply to the owner's laissez-faire attitude toward sex between slaves. At the very least slaveholders encouraged breeding by incentivising pregnancy through reduced workloads and heightened rations.⁴¹⁸ Others predicated the allowance of a marriage on the production of children as property for the master.⁴¹⁹ Others simply forced Black women into procreative relationships. For example, after Rose Williams spurned Rufus, the mate chosen for her by her master, the slaveholder told her: "Woman, I'se pay big money for you'se, and I'se done dat for de cause I'se wants you'se to raise me chilluns. I'se put you to live with Rufus for dat purpose. Now, if you'se don't want to be whipped at de stake, you'se do what I'se want."⁴²⁰ In these ways, planters devised a breeding system for their slaves in which their racist stereotypes about Black women's lasciviousness and fertility would be constantly reinforced.

⁴¹⁷ Olmsted 1860, 113

⁴¹⁸ D. G. White 1985, 99; Jordan-Lake 2005, 70. Jacqueline Jones notes that pregnant women were tasked as 'half hands' during their pregnancy, though this did not necessarily spare them the overseers' and masters' sadistic punishments. (Jones 1985, 17-21) *Contra*, see: B. Wood 2011, 546, but her treatment is cursory.

⁴¹⁹ About his own marriage proposal, Henry Bibb remembered that his wife's "master was very much in favor of the match, but entirely upon selfish principles. When I went to ask his permission to marry Malinda, his answer was in the affirmative with but one condition, which I consider too vulgar to be written in this book." (Bibb 1849, 40)

⁴²⁰ Yetman 2002, 148

Around the 1830s proslavery advocates began to see that the Jezebel construct was actually a weak point in their ideology, where anti-slavery proponents could attack them for exposing Southern children to household servants so ‘morally degraded’ by the slave system as to be hyper-sexual and hence corrupting influences. The Louisiana planter quoted above is emblematic of this unease.⁴²¹ In response, proslavery thinkers developed “a more positive image of black women,” one that “was in keeping with the idea of white moral supremacy.”⁴²² George Fitzhugh, a Virginian slavery advocate, went so far as to claim that the ‘peculiar institution’ actually “enforces decent morality in all” in a sort of trickle-down effect: “The intercourse of the house-servants with the white family, assimilates, in some degree, their state of information, and their moral conduct, to that of the whites.”⁴²³ These rationalisations led to a new stereotype, ‘Mammy’, who was deployed by proslavery advocates when the situation called for her and will be discussed in this chapter’s Loyalty section (IV.i).

This new stereotype never truly displaced Jezebel, but served as an alternative propagandist weapon. The Jezebel stereotype persisted through Reconstruction, the Jim Crow era, the Civil Rights victories, and even down into our modern popular culture. In Thomas Dixon’s 1905 novel, *The Clansman*, a temptress mulatto woman named Lydia Brown threatened the whole Southern social order when Augustus Stoneman, a barely veiled caricature of Thaddeus Stevens, “fell victim to the wiles of the yellow vampire

⁴²¹ He continued to say that “there was no possibility of [his children] being brought up in decency at home.” (Olmsted [1856] 1968, 602) Deborah White quotes an op-ed in the *Southern Cultivator* in this connection: “if, in this association, the child becomes familiar with the indelicate, vulgar, and lascivious manners and conversation, an impression is made upon the mind and heart, which lasts for years—perhaps for life.” (D. G. White 1985, 43-4)

⁴²² D. G. White 1985, 44

⁴²³ Fitzhugh [1857] 1988, 29

who kept [his] house.”⁴²⁴ In the novel, this state of affairs is made out to be justification for the KKK’s terrorist campaign against and overthrow of the Reconstruction government. When John Dollard interviewed Southern townspeople in the 1930s to determine their views on Black sexuality, he found the same old hyper-sexual and hyper-fertile stereotypes in full swing. He transcribed a series of racist jokes, all of which stressed that for Black women “death is equated with lack of sexual gratification and life with sexual activity.” Dollard explained that the premise of these jokes was that, in the White imagination, “life without sexual expression is inconceivable to Negroes.”⁴²⁵

The Jezebel stereotype was a powerful tool in the Southern slaveholders’ dehumanising arsenal. It was used to ‘justify’ their wanton exposure of Black women’s bodies, their efforts to force Black women to reproduce at a life-threatening pace and under dangerous conditions, as well as their widespread indulgence in and commodification of the rape of Black women. As many feminist scholars and commentators have demonstrated in recent years, the Jezebel construct continues to serve White males’ interests well after Emancipation. The lauding of Sara Baartman’s buttocks as an emblem of hyper-sexuality has informed modern conceptions of Black beauty, which often emphasise the size of Black women’s behinds.⁴²⁶ The supposed hyper-fertility of Black mothers has been further perverted in the modern era as not just a reflection of the women’s sexuality but also of their economic worthlessness, in that they are said to produce more children than they can support and hence are a perpetual drag on the country’s tax dollars. This relatively new perversion of the Jezebel stereotype is familiar to all as the “welfare

⁴²⁴ Dixon 1905, 371. For more of Dixon’s derogatory ‘temptress’ stereotype, see: pp. 57-8, 91, & 145.

⁴²⁵ Dollard [1937] 1957, 168-9

⁴²⁶ The legacy of Baartman’s popular representations is the central thrust of Hobson 2005.

queen.”⁴²⁷ Furthermore, the welfare queen construct is used as a smokescreen to blame Black women for their single-motherhood, because many moderns are staunchly unwilling to address America’s systemic incarceration practices, a purpose of which is to disrupt the Black family unit so as to disadvantage as many Black men, women, and children as possible, thereby perpetuating the racial caste system.⁴²⁸ It can only be hoped that the current wave of anti-police brutality, anti-mass incarceration, and minority-inclusive feminist protests is able to shift America’s national discourse away from anti-Black stereotypes that, as has been demonstrated, have their roots in early White American slaving culture.

ii. Buck: Black Men’s Sexuality, Rape, and Whites’ Policing of Miscegenation

Antebellum White Americans’ strict and violent, legal and extralegal policing against Black male and White female ‘miscegenation’ was justified by referencing Black men’s stereotypically ‘unruly’ sexual urges and their supposed similarity to the urges of animals, which were understood to be aimed at women one rung higher in the Great Chain of Being.⁴²⁹ Thomas Jefferson, for instance, claimed that Black men’s aesthetic

⁴²⁷ Collins 2002, 80. Much of Collin’s work delves deeply into the modern extensions of the Jezebel and Mammy constructs. Cf. Alexander 2010, 47-8.

⁴²⁸ Alexander 2010, 174-5: “Hundreds of thousands of black men are unable to be good fathers for their children, not because of a lack of commitment or desire but because they are warehoused in prisons, locked in cages. They did not walk out on their families voluntarily; they were taken away in handcuffs, often due to a massive federal program known as the War on Drugs. More African American adults are under correctional control today—in prison or jail, on probation or parole—than were enslaved in 1850, a decade before the Civil War began. The mass incarceration of people of color is a big part of the reason that a black child born today is less likely to be raised by both parents than a black child born in slavery. The absence of black fathers from families across America is not simply a function of laziness, immaturity, or too much time watching *SportsCenter*. Thousands of black men have disappeared into prisons and jails, locked away for drug crimes that are largely ignored when committed by whites.”

⁴²⁹ As Winthrop Jordan explains, from the beginning of Englishmen’s experience with the African subcontinent, exaggeration about the Black penis was used to liken Black men to ‘unruly’ animals, and hence to justify measures of control comparable to those meant for the management of these animals, such as caging and castration (Jordan 1968, 28-32, 158-9). Sc. Josiah Priest’s 1843 denunciation of Black people as not-human: “Between the sexual members of the negro man and the brute called an ass, there was but little difference as to elongation and magnitude. ...The baleful fire of unchaste amour rages through the

and sexual “judgement” was “in favour of the whites, declared by their preference of them, as uniformly as is the preference of the Oranootan for the black women over those of his own species.” Just as the apes were thought to have a crude, rapist sexuality, so too did Jefferson consider Black men’s sexuality deviant and coarse: “They are more ardent after their female: but love seems with them to be more an eager desire, than a tender delicate mixture of sentiment and sensation.”⁴³⁰ This sort of racist ‘logic’ was used as a pretext for the implementation of severe social controls on Black men, such as castration as a means of punishment, meant to terrorise and demoralise them, as bell hooks explains, “so that they would not resist white authority.”⁴³¹

Slaveholders and officials attempted to stave off resistance and “turbulent behaviour in male slaves in much the same way that a farmer might neuter a bull or horse.”⁴³² This ‘turbulent behaviour’ was typically the accused, often fabricated rape of a White woman—Black women, free or enslaved, virtually never had their rapes taken seriously due to the currency of the Jezebel stereotype.⁴³³ For example, in 1782 a judicially prescribed castration was doled out to a slave living in Northampton County, Virginia, after he was convicted of the attempted rape of a white woman.⁴³⁴ In 1718 the *Boston News-Letter* printed a story that well encapsulates Whites’ view on the Black male’s ‘unruly’ penis as a driver to rape and on the necessity of White women’s protection by

negro’s blood, more fiercely than in the blood of any other people, inflaming their imaginations with corresponding images and ideas...” (Priest 1843, 151-2) Cf. Jobson 1623, 52; Topsell 1658, 3, 8-9; The Golden Coast: or, A description of Guinney 1665, 76; W. Smith 1745, 52.

⁴³⁰ Jefferson 1788, 148

⁴³¹ hooks 1981, 21

⁴³² Sommerville 1997, 79

⁴³³ D. G. White 1985, 164-5. Dollard explained that this was true even in the 1930s, and that White men’s safety from prosecution for the rape of a Black woman was part of Whites’ “sexual gain” in the racialised social system. (Dollard [1937] 1957, 137ff)

⁴³⁴ D. G. White 1985, 78; see this page also for a similar case in Virginia’s Southampton County.

White men. The journalist claims that a White man caught “a Negro man” attempting the rape of “an English Woman,” and that the White man “cut off all his unruly parts smack and smooth,” which “doubtlessly” resulted in the Black being “cured from any more such Wicked Attempts.”⁴³⁵ While this sort of cheerleading for slaves’ castrations was relatively common during the pre-Revolutionary period, such mutilations began to fall out of favour by the 19th century.⁴³⁶ For example, in 1850 Tennessee officials charged Gabriel Worley with “mayhem” for castrating one of his slaves in order to neuter his “turbulent, insolent disposition” and to stop his “repeated escapes and harassment of other slaves.” Worley’s sentence to two years in jail was upheld by the state’s Supreme Court.⁴³⁷ Slave owners then had to content themselves with their other demoralising expressions of sexual dominance over slaves.

Slaveholders’ avenues for such expressions were legion. As is attested for enslaved women, some masters would also keep their enslaved men inappropriately clothed while at work. George Grieve, a Jacobin revolutionary who moved to Virginia after the death of Maximilien Robespierre, noted that naked slaves were “a singular sight for an European”

⁴³⁵ *Boston News-Letter*, March 3, 1718 (as quoted in Jordan 1968, 158)

⁴³⁶ Jordan 1968, 155-7. While Winthrop Jordan is undoubtedly correct that a growing preference for more humane punishments is mostly responsible for the moving away from castration, another component of the trend is surely the outcry from poorer whites that only death satisfied their desire for ‘justice’. In J.F. Yancey’s article published by the *Marshall Democrat*, August 19th, 1859, he defends the actions of a mid-July lynch mob by stressing that for rape “the law is not adequate to the crime. ...What is the penalty? Castration! What punishment is this? None at all—as well castrate a bull to punish him.” Some Whites imagined that ‘unruly parts’ were for Black men, like wild bulls, a stressful burden, and so their removal was no punishment at all, but a favour. Consider this disturbing tale that Charles Janson included in his travelogue: After a doctor literally ambushes an ‘unruly’ slave with a castration, he tells the Black man “that he had received the punishment due for his abuse and insults to white women. The doctor added, that he would not touch a single dollar by way of recompense, and was soon informed that his patient had become a *cool orderly* slave. About three months after the operation... the emasculated slave suddenly appeared before the doctor. ...the fellow had on his shoulder a wood-cutter’s axe. To turn back or to risk a meeting was the question. ...[The doctor] boldly enquired after his health, though at a cautious distance. The negro replied: “Tank ye, massa doctor, you did a me much great good; white or blackee woman, I care not for.” This expression, the doctor said, was more acceptable at the moment, than the planter’s offered fee of an hundred dollars would have proved at any period of his life.” (Janson [1807] 1935, 387)

⁴³⁷ Sommerville 1997, 79

in a footnote of his 1798 translation of the Marquis de Chastellux's *Travels in North*

America. He continues:

I have frequently seen in Virginia, on visits to gentlemen's houses, young negroes and negresses running about or basking in the courtyard naked as they came into the world, with well characterized marks of perfect puberty; and young negroes from sixteen to twenty years old, with not an article of clothing, but a loose shirt, descending half way down their thighs, waiting at table where were ladies, without any apparent embarrassment on one side, or the slightest attempt at concealment on the other.⁴³⁸

While some slave owners may have rationalised as thrift their not clothing slaves according to the era's standards of decency, doubtlessly most who did so understood the act to be an expression of sexual dominance, and the nude slaves to be a titillating sort of dinner entertainment.

Another avenue by which planters expressed sexual dominance over their male slaves was to rob them of paternity. Hence the sexual relationships into which masters increasingly encouraged or forcibly thrust slaves could humiliate Black men, in that the relationships' procreative purpose, the only truly socially acceptable purpose to sex in so Puritanical a society, was usurped by slaveholders and warped into the mere increase of estates' slave 'stock'.⁴³⁹ Black men were forced into helplessness concerning the control of their own children. It was not always this way. In the first half of the 17th century the distinction between free persons, indentured servants, and the enslaved was a good deal

⁴³⁸ Chastellux [1786] 1963, 585, n. 19 (Grieve). Strangely, the paragraph prompting this footnote does not actually refer to naked slaves, just children sleeping by a fire (p. 404). Cf. Entry of June 22nd, 1781: Feltman 1853, 5; & Schoepf [1788] 1911, 1.357: "European ladies would be horrified to see about them negroes and negresses in a costume which starts no blush here."

⁴³⁹ Henry Bibb expresses a degree of humiliation in his recounting how his wife's master agreed to their marriage because it would increase his slave population, a condition Bibb considered "too vulgar to be written." (Bibb 1849, 40) Deborah White notes that "too often, when two people declared their intention to marry, as on a North Carolina plantation, all the master said was 'don't forget to bring me a little one or two for next year.'" (D. G. White 1985, 99)

fuzzier, and the laws allowed for explicitly Christian Black men to wrest from slaveholders a measure of control over their offspring.⁴⁴⁰ By the end of the 17th century, racial laws were passed that barred Black men from all claims to paternity, and all children of enslaved women were to be slaves for life. By this legal state of affairs, an enslaved Black woman's procreation could no longer threaten the *prima facie* racial logic of the American slave system, since all of her children were then legally Black and slaves for life, even if fathered by White men of the highest societal positions. So White efforts to establish and defend a Colour Line became fixated on a specific sort of 'miscegenation': Black men fathering children by White women,⁴⁴¹ the prohibition of which played into the Southern ideals of chivalry, so often expressed as the 'protection' of White women from 'unruly' Black men.

Ideals of chivalry and honour were of paramount importance to the Southern Whites' conception of manhood. It was an 'aristocratic' affectation that insisted the only *real men* in the country were upper-crust men who had the means to cloister 'their women' (family members by blood or marriage) behind head-to-toe finery and away from the leering gazes of Black men and poor Whites. These were the White men who were of such social standing that they could flout laws (and good sense) against assault and murder in order to avenge perceived slights to their or 'their women's' honour.⁴⁴² This was also a means

⁴⁴⁰ For an extended treatment of cases that highlight the complexities of 17th century sexual *mores* and early colonial slaves' ability to use Christianity to contest their bondage, see: K. M. Brown 1996, esp. Ch. 4, 107-37.

⁴⁴¹ Hodes 1997, 96-8

⁴⁴² Antebellum plantation novels are always keen to show that their male protagonists conform to this paradigm of chivalry. In William Caruther's *The Kentuckian in New-York*, for instance, the rich-enough but rather boorish Kentuckian Davon brawls with "three chaps" over a "country gal" when one of them "put his arm round her, and called her his dear, and all that." Davon continues, "I had heard tell of these city gals, and I thought if she was pleased it was none of my business; but presently I heard her sobbing and crying... So the Irish whisky, or old Kentuck, I don't know which, began to rise in my throat. I jumped up and raised the war-whoop. 'Old Kentuck for ever!' said I... afore I took him a sneezer, between the two eyes, glasses

of expressing racial superiority and sexual dominance over the enslaved, in that slaveholders forced Black men to live in a state which is the precise inversion of this White, 'chivalrous' manhood. Children fathered by enslaved men and women were routinely sold, and the father was virtually helpless to do anything about it. If the child was a girl, and especially if she looked as though she would grow up to be attractive, light-skinned, and 'likely', she would be sold into the "fancy trade" and her father would again be helpless to stop her rape in slave pens, her commoditized rape at the hands of those who bought her for that purpose, or her being passed freely around her owner's friend group.⁴⁴³ Even if a slaveholder allowed his slaves to marry, he would often make it clear that a slave husband could offer no protection for his wife from the total domination of her master.⁴⁴⁴ By the continual enforcement of a dichotomy between the 'chivalrous'

and all; he dropped over like a rabbit when you knock 'em behind the head." Davon then soundly thrashes the other two before "the real officers" showed up. Davon's gallantry cannot be contained by the law, and so he "jist slipped [his] foot behind one of 'em and pushed him down, and tumbled the other feller over him, and then [he] showed them a clean pair of heels." (p. 1.65-7) His peers get a good laugh out of his 'resisting arrest', and at the end of the novel Davon marries his damsel in distress. George Tucker's *Valley of Shenandoah* has its protagonist, Edward Grayson, die in a duel with one of his best friends, Gildon, a fight instigated because Gildon had spent a few months in Virginia courting Grayson's sister, Louisa, but ultimately returned to New York in order to marry his much richer 'high-school sweetheart'. Louisa remained, to the chagrin of a reader hoping for a mere crumb of activity in the novel, angelically chaste during the courtship, so the duel was fought simply because Grayson felt he and Louisa to be dishonoured by the fact she was not worshipped and married by her first serious suitor. Tucker was in a sense levying criticism against Southern 'aristocratic' *mores*, but nevertheless offered a sketch of the insanity and verve with which Southern men, on the slightest provocation, were thought and expected to 'protect' women. It should be noted that earlier in the novel, part of Gildon's wooing of Louisa involved him beating a poor White who would not give the lady's carriage right-of-way on a road (p. 1.128-40).

⁴⁴³ In John Brown's narrative, he recalls of slave pens that "the youngest and handsomest females were set apart as the concubines of the masters, who generally changed mistresses every week. I could relate, in connection with this part of my subject, some terrible things I know of, that happened, and lay bare some immorality and vice which I witnessed; but I abstain... The slave-pen is only another name for a brothel." (J. Brown 1855, 111-2) Edward Baptist's masterful study of the correspondence between three slave traders offers several examples of how these men passed certain 'fancy maids' between them. (Baptist 2001, 1643)

⁴⁴⁴ Henry Bibb's master drilled this message into even his slave driver, forcing the "colored" driver to flog his own wife. (Bibb 1849, 112) Louis Hughes' narrative is particularly disturbing on this account. When his wife Matilda told her mistress, "You shall not whip me," the deranged mistress called for her husband, Boss, who "commenced choking [Matilda]." Hughes "was in the dining room, and could hear everything. My blood boiled in my veins to see my wife so abused; yet I dare not open my mouth." Matilda, with their twin babies, ran away to a slave trader in the hopes of being sold to a less abusive family, but when Boss retrieves her, he and his wife "at once went to the barn where my wife was tied to the joist, and Boss and

White manhood and the ‘helpless’ Black one, dominance itself in the White imagination came to be inextricably sexual, and so Whites imagined that any Black insurrectionary activity, the worst case scenario of which was to their mind the toppling and inversion of their racialised social system, would be similarly sexual.

That is, Black men would take revenge for their degradation and sexual humiliation by raping White women and taking them as concubines after a successful revolt. This sort of ‘chivalrous concern’ runs through many newspaper accounts of insurrectionary activity.⁴⁴⁵ For example, second-hand ‘reporting’ on the Denmark Vesey conspiracy in 1822 ascribed to the ringleaders a desire for White women as the motivation for their insurrection.⁴⁴⁶ Rumours about the slaves’ intentions to rape or enslave White women stem from comments made by Rolla, one of the ringleaders. When the authorities asked what the slaves intended to do with White women and children, Rolla replied, “When we are done with the fellows, we know what to do with the wenches,” and reporters took this to mean rape. Rolla’s transcribed confession, however, is explicit that Vesey’s plan was “that all should be cut off, both men, women and children, and... it was no sin for us to

the madam beat her by turns.” Hughes relates, “I was trembling from head to foot, for I was powerless to do anything for her. My twin babies lived only six months after that.” (Hughes 1987, 97-9) Some particularly cruel masters would forbid marriage entirely. For example, ex-slave Frank Bell reported that his master, when he found out that Bell had married a woman and was sneaking off at night to visit her, “takes a big, long knife and cuts her head plumb off, and ties a great, heavy weight to her and makes me throw her in the river. Then he puts me in chains and every night he come give me a whippin’, for long time.” WPA *Slave Narratives*, vol. 16, part 1, 61.

⁴⁴⁵ In connection with Gabriel’s aborted slave insurrection in Virginia, *The Kentucky Gazette*, October 6th, 1800 reported that the Black men intended to “take possession of the houses and white women.” Cf. J.R., *Raleigh Register*, July 27th, 1802: ‘Negro Conspiracy’, in which it was reported that the slaves had planned to “kill the men and boys over 6 or 7 years of age... [but] the young and handsome of the whites they were to keep for themselves.” See Jordan 1968, 398, where he, for some reason, leaves the reliability of J.R.’s account an open question: “Perhaps such reports were well founded... Perhaps white reporters invented these assertions to satisfy their itch to discover Negroes libidinally yearning for white women.” Based on the actual confessions of the slaves involved in Denmark Vesey’s conspiracy, cited below, this newspaper article is very likely an example of the latter.

⁴⁴⁶ J. C. Carroll 1968, 96, 115 n. 60: *Charleston Courier*, July 29th, 1822; *Carolina Gazette*, July 6th, 1822.

do so, for the Lord had commanded us to do it.”⁴⁴⁷ Adhering to the facts was evidently of less importance to Southern newsmen than sensationalising their accounts in ways that ‘justified’ White men’s claims about protecting White women.⁴⁴⁸ They were never able to report even a single instance where those who participated in slave revolts raped a White woman.⁴⁴⁹ This sort of counter-factual spinning in the media should be familiar to those following the current racist and apologist coverage of American police murdering unarmed Black men, women, and children, meant to ‘justify’ continued discriminatory policing and the officers’ acquittals.⁴⁵⁰

When Black men were put on trial after White women levied rape accusations against them, White men often took the opportunity to lynch and make an example of the Black

⁴⁴⁷ Kennedy and Parker 1822, 63, 68. Cf. J. Hamilton [1822] 1970, 13. The court is adamant that it kept its prisoners sufficiently divided so as to preclude collusion, and so other slaves’ corroborating confessions that murder rather than rape and possession of White women should be taken as proof that Southern reporters were indulging in the Buck stereotype rather than working from available facts. For example, Thomas Blackwood’s slave Jesse testified that the slave revolutionaries “should murder the women and children, for [Vesey] said, God has so commanded it in the Scriptures. ... Vesey said, he thought it was for our safety, not to spare one white skin alive, for this was the plan they pursued in St. Domingo.” (J. Hamilton [1822] 1970, 39, Appendix item H.)

⁴⁴⁸ P. Wood 1974, 236-7

⁴⁴⁹ David Brion Davis, among many others, notes that “there is not a shred of evidence that black insurrectionists in America ever had sexual contact with a single white woman, though Nat Turner’s band of killers had total power over numerous white women and girls. I can add that in my own reading I have seen no evidence of rape in the great slave uprisings in Barbados in 1816, in Demerara (Guiana) in 1823, or in Jamaica in 1831.” (Davis 1993, unpaginated; Jordan 1968, 398; Aptheker [1943] 1963, 224, n. 55)

⁴⁵⁰ One of the typical ways that news outlets sensationalise unarmed Blacks’ murders is by pumping out stories about the victims’ ‘history of violence’—no matter how irrelevant to the case at hand—and about the officers’ life, highlighting their ‘good characters’, clean histories, or lack of choice but to shoot given the perilousness of police work. To offer but one example from a body of far too many, consider the *Washington Post*’s reporting on the Cleveland murder of Tamir Rice, a 12 year old boy, at the hands of officer Timothy Loehmann, described as a “rookie” when indeed he had ‘served’ for two years. The *Post* interviewed Loehmann’s father, who insisted his son “had no choice” but to shoot Rice, because “he went for the [fake] gun” and looked 20 as opposed to 12. Footage taken of the murder makes it clear that Rice did not draw his fake weapon, nor could such a little boy be mistaken as a threat had the officer taken any time at all to assess the situation. Instead, Loehmann fired within two seconds of opening his cruiser door, not saying a word to Rice, and yet the *Post* trots out his father to explain that, because of the shooting, Loehmann’s once unblemished life “took a sharp turn.” The North East Ohio Media Group, who provided the *Post* with this information, also ran a story assassinating the character of Rice’s parents so as to insist that Rice’s death was not a similar ‘sharp turn’ insofar as he “grew up around violence,” and hence was destined for a violent end. (Phillip, Abby, *Washington Post*, December 2nd, 2014: <http://goo.gl/tfIZ6d>; Blackwell, Brandon. “Tamir Rice’s father has history of domestic violence,” *Northeast Ohio Media Group*, November 28th, 2014: <http://goo.gl/qxDJHv>)

men regardless of the facts of the case, for, guilty or not, these men represented contact between slaves and White women, conduct that in the “racialised social system” was exclusively reserved for White men. The ‘unruly’ Black rapist stereotype and Whites’ ‘chivalrous’ posturing concealed the terrorism’s aim of maintaining caste distinctions favourable to the Whites. Notably, the economic interests of slaveholders tended to spare Black men of overly prejudicial sentencing and to guard against the mob’s ‘chivalrous’ lynch mentality;⁴⁵¹ however, the mentality was certainly present, coupled with hatred for the planters’ interference. For example, in 1859 a citizen of Davidson County, North Carolina, wrote to the Governor concerning the possible pardon of a slave convicted of raping a White woman, crying, “Our wives and our daughters are to be insulted and injured by every Buck Negro upon the highways... [simply because of] a few *speculators who care* more for a few *hundred dollars* than they do for the safety of the females of their country.”⁴⁵² Despite planter interference, antebellum White men were sometimes able rally a mob so as to lay down their own racist judgements.⁴⁵³ In July of 1859, for instance, a Missouri farmer named James M. Shackelford rallied a mob that lynched four enslaved men, two of whom had allegedly raped a White woman (“victim of his hellish lust”) and a White child respectively. Shackelford ‘justified’ his “mob law,” carried out before the two alleged rapists’ trials could begin, in a *Marshall Democrat* article by proclaiming, in a manner which looked ahead to the terrorism mentality of Whites in the post-Civil war period, that “a spirit of insubordination existed amongst the negro

⁴⁵¹ Hodes 1997, 57-66; Sommerville 1995

⁴⁵² Henry Hege to Governor John W. Ellis, Apr. 17, 1860, Governor’s Papers 149, folder marked “1860”, as cited in Hodes 1997, 64, 241 n. 74. Emphasis is Hege’s.

⁴⁵³ Charles Janson, an English businessman travelling through the South between 1793 and 1806, noted that in Chowan, North Carolina, after a mob tracked down a slave who allegedly had raped a planter’s daughter, they never even considered turning him into the authorities. Instead, “the enraged pursuers tied him to a tree, collected wood around him, and immediately consumed his body to ashes.” (Janson [1807] 1935, 386)

population that required a terrible example to be set them,” because the law was not a sufficient deterrent. All that kept Black men in their place, and their ‘hellish lust’ at bay, was the militancy of ‘chivalrous’ Whites.⁴⁵⁴

That fear of Black male rapists was simply Southern ‘chivalric’ posturing meant to mask efforts to keep the Colour Line sharp is evident from the fact that White women themselves “seldom if ever made allusion to black rapists in their letters and diaries,” even during the Civil War when they generally expressed concern about a breakdown in law and order.⁴⁵⁵ In the aftermath of the war that all changed. Once slavery’s legal sanctions of White dominance over Blacks were abolished, and troops were present to enforce the freedmen’s rights, Southern White women began to join in the bloodthirsty chorus that proclaimed Black men ever-present sexual threats to their safety, threats that required increasingly violent extralegal control and the imposition of a new racial caste system. A raging speech delivered by political bulldog Rebecca Felton crossed the pages of many American newspapers in the late 1890s, and it highlights how the period’s strengthening of the ‘Buck’ stereotype correlated directly with Black folks’ increased involvement in politics as voters and politicians. Foaming at the mouth, she thundered:

⁴⁵⁴ Shackleford, James M. *Marshall Democrat*, July 22nd, 1859. On the law’s inadequacy, Shackleford promises, “The people of Saline county will so continue to act until the Legislature shall do their duty, revise the criminal code, make the penalty adequate to the crime—satisfy public opinion. Let the law harmonise with it. The law that is not based upon public opinion, is but a rope of sand.” The “hellish lust” snippet comes out of an article written by an admirer of Shackleford’s, J.F. Yancey, who saw in the lynchings a ‘chivalric’ motivation and lauded them in those terms. “My God! Is not innocent childhood permitted to pass unscathed and unpolluted by the fiendish deeds of black demons? And are we to be stigmatized as polluted law-breakers, by the myrmidons of negro-equality, for daring to afford the protection to our offspring and ourselves, which we are taught is the first great law of nature?” Yancey, J.F. *Marshall Democrat*, August 19th, 1859.

⁴⁵⁵ Davis 1993, unpaginated; Hodes 1997, 140-1. In fact, White women during the Civil War as often turned to their enslaved men for protection against outsider, Yankee threats, such as was the case with the “young missus” Anna B. Mosby, daughter of a wealthy planter in Second Creek, Virginia. The slave Nelson claims that she “wanted black to fight for her.” (Jordan 1993, 100, 170)

Wake up, men of Georgia, to the crisis now upon you!
 These white girls are the coming mothers of the white race.
 ...If it needs lynching to protect woman's dearest
 possession from human beasts, then I say lynch a thousand
 times a week if necessary. ...I say, with due respect to all
 who listen to me, that as long as your politicians take the
 colored man into their embrace on election day and make
 him think he is a man and brother, so long will lynching
 prevail, because the cause of it will grow and increase, for
 'familiarity breeds contempt.'⁴⁵⁶

Of course, White men also continued to ramp up their racist pronouncements on Black men's uncontrollable rapist urges,⁴⁵⁷ and they did so with same frenzy with which they "went to battle" and committed terrorism against Black citizens and their allies.⁴⁵⁸

Southern fiction also clung white knuckled to this stereotype paradigm, nowhere more enthusiastically wielded than in Thomas Dixon's far too famous novels, which portray the Southern Whites' terror campaign as the sort of 'chivalry' "the world had not seen since the Knights of the Middle Ages rode on their Holy Crusades."⁴⁵⁹ In no way,

⁴⁵⁶ Felton, Rebecca Latimer, "Woman Advocates Lynching." *The Washington Post*, August 14th, 1897, 6. Cf. Harris, Corra. "A Southern Woman's View," *Independent*, May 18th, 1899, vol. 51, 1354-5, sections of which are quoted in Hodes 1997, 201 & Fredrickson 1971, 277.

⁴⁵⁷ Sc. 'Pitchfork' Ben Tillman's raving on the senate floor: *Congressional Record*, Vol. 41, Cong. 59, Sess. 2, 1440-1. Cf. Winston 1901, 109: "When a knock is heard at the door, she [the White woman] shudders with nameless horror. The black brute is lurking in the dark, a monstrous beast, crazed with lust. His ferocity is almost demonical. A mad bull or a tiger could scarcely be more brutal."

⁴⁵⁸ Senator Tillman, a posse leader of paramilitary Red Shirts during South Carolina's 1876 election, was uncommonly frank in admitting that Southern Whites in fact waged war against Black folks and committed open election frauds so as to revoke Blacks' citizen status: "We reorganized the Democratic party with one plank, and only one plank, namely, that "this is a white man's country and white men must govern it." Under that banner we went to battle. We had 8,000 negro militia organized by carpetbaggers. ...These fellows forgot that there were in South Carolina some forty-odd thousand ex-Confederate soldiers. ...So when this condition of desperation had reached the unbearable point; when, as I say, despair had come upon us, we set to work to take the government away from them. ...Clashes came. ...We had the Ellenton riot, in which no one ever knew how many negroes were killed, but there were forty or fifty or a hundred. It was a fight between barbarism and civilization, between the African and the Caucasian, for mastery. It was then that 'we shot them;' it was then that 'we killed them;' it was then that 'we stuffed ballot boxes.'" *Congressional Record*, Vol. 41, Cong. 59., Sess. 2, Jan. 21st, 1907, p. 1440

⁴⁵⁹ Dixon 1905, 316. See his presentation of the hypnotised reenactment of a Black slave's rape of a White woman, upon sight of which the KKK members "began to cry like children. "Stop him! Stop him!" screamed a clansman, springing on the negro and grinding his heel into his big thick neck. A dozen more were on him in a moment, kicking, stamping, cursing, and crying like madmen." (Ibid. 323-4) Cf. Tillman's description of the psychology of Southern lynchers: "Our brains reel under the staggering blow and hot

however, did the actions of Southern Whites stem from a simple ‘knightly’ mentality. In publication after publication, speech after speech, Southerners unveiled the ‘brute’ Black man stereotype as a smokescreen to mask the fact that, rather than a ‘chivalrous’ response to a surge in Black sexual criminality, the post-Emancipation lynching campaign was really militaristic terrorism meant to demoralise Black folk and their allies.⁴⁶⁰ This was a war effort, more sadistic but similar to the Spartan *krypteia*, with which they culled their ‘unruly’ Helots.⁴⁶¹ It was aimed at facilitating the then politically united poor and planter White classes’ efforts to roll back Reconstruction’s democratic reforms and to re-establish the caste system, to be based on the *racial* categories of White and Black, rather than on the previous *racialised* categories of free and enslaved.⁴⁶²

blood surges to the heart. Civilisation peels off us, any and all of who are men, and we revert to the original savage type whose impulses under any and all such circumstances has always been to ‘kill! kill! kill!’ ...On the subject of rape I voice the feeling and the purpose of 95 percent of the true white men of the Southern States. ...I am not ashamed of them. I have no apologies to make for them. The Senators from Wisconsin and Colorado may rave, the newspapers may howl, but men who were reared by virtuous mothers and who revere womanly purity as the most priceless jewel of their civilization will do as we of the South have done.” (*Congressional Record*, Vol. 41, Cong. 59, Sess. 2, 1441-2) One gets the impression that Dixon and Tillman were mutual admirers, fond enough of each other to crib from their respective work. On the pricelessness of White women’s chastity, sc. Dixon 1905, 325: “I hold in my hand the water of your river bearing the red stain of the life of a Southern woman, a priceless sacrifice on the altar of outraged civilisation.”

⁴⁶⁰ The late 19th through 20th centuries’ nearly 1,300 lynchings of Whites, most of whom were advocates for Reconstruction’s reforms, prove that a political agenda motivated lynching rather than any genuine fear for White women’s safety. For a modern compilation of different lynching statistics databases, see: Cook 2012.

⁴⁶¹ Plutarch *Lycurgus* 28.2: “The leaders sent into the country those of the keenest youth, armed with knives and the necessary provisions, but nothing else. Scattering to out-of-the-way places during the day, the youths lied in wait, but coming down into the roads at night, they slit the throat of any captured Helot. Often the youths went out into the fields and took down the strongest and most influential of these Helots.”

⁴⁶² This political unification of the planter and labourer classes in the South solidified while racist propaganda, such as that discussed in this chapter, ‘produced difference’ to a degree that quashed Southern labour organizer’s valiant efforts to rally together inclusive unions that could wrest even living wages from the planters’ and industrialists’ fists. The planter class offered the White labourers, instead of truly increased economic equality, a “public and psychological wage” that included superior social status compared to Blacks, access to managerial employment, and the law’s unofficial sanction to wantonly rape and murder Black folks. The White labourers then saw “in every advance of Negroes a threat to their racial prerogatives,” and the violence with which they so often met that ‘threat’ resulted in Black citizens being too “afraid to build decent homes, or dress well, or own carriages, bicycles or automobiles,” or, most importantly, organize a sufficient resistance to Whites’ onslaught. “The result of all this,” explains W.E.B. Du Bois, “had to be unfortunate for the Negro. ...He did not believe himself a man like other men. He could not teach his children self-respect. ...Large numbers sank into apathy and fatalism! There was no

This is why after the Civil War ‘miscegenation’ between Black men and White women came to be an even more ardent focal point for White anxiety concerning the American caste system. Certainly the antebellum South saw its fair share of combat against Black men and White women’s access to one another, and White women known to sleep with or conceive children with Black men suffered serious losses in social status.⁴⁶³ These pairings’ ‘mulatto’ children, however, threatened only the racial *logic* of the slave system, while legal statuses continued to maintain the system’s integrity. The Jim Crow era had to rely on the Colour Line and the ‘one drop’ rule, and Southerners enforced these by terrorizing Black communities and increasing their scrutiny of bloodlines. The White race’s continued ‘supremacy’ hinged on the ‘purity’ of White women and their ability to produce ‘purebred’ children, since race-mixing was invariably thought to weaken the heritable characteristics of the ‘superior’ race and White men could hardly be expected to relinquish their sexual access to Black women.⁴⁶⁴ Charles Carroll’s 1900 *The*

chance for the black man; there was no use striving; ambition was not for the Negro. ...The real question is not so much what the Negro has done in spite of caste, as what he might have accomplished with reasonable encouragement.” (Du Bois 1935, 700-2) Du Bois also wonderfully dramatized this political dynamic in his *The Black Flame* historical fiction trilogy. See especially: Du Bois 1957, 11-58, where a representative of the planter class is tasked with playing White and Black labour organizers against one another with a plan to “build a dual, mutually self-effacing labor class which will eliminate strikes, keep down wages and set the South on the road to an unrivalled prosperity.” (p. 55) This divide and conquer strategy was employed broadly across the United States to mind-boggling success as the 19th century gave way to the 20th. Anti-Slav, Italian, Jewish, Chinese, German, and ‘Negro’ racism served as a keen weapon in the monopolising industrialists’ overall managerial strategy. (Roediger and Esch 2012, Ch. 1)

⁴⁶³ Jones 1985, 149-51. Women’s defamation due to spending time with Black men is explored at length in Hodes 1997, esp. 57-67, 161-5. Consider also the story that ex-slave Charles Ball related about the daughter of a Georgia planter. When her pregnancy by a slave is discovered, her father convenes a family council to divine a manner by which “the honor of the family might be saved.” The woman’s son was sold illegally into slavery, and her eventually fruitful efforts to reclaim him caused her to be “degraded from her rank in society.” Ball’s mistress felt so morally above this woman that she “commanded” her to tell her all the scandalous details of her relationship with a slave. (Shugert 1836, 307-12)

⁴⁶⁴ On the weakening of the White race’s ‘superior’ characteristics, consider Alabama senator J. Thomas Heflin’s remarks: “The far-reaching harm and danger of marriage between whites and negroes to the great white race that God intended should rule the world is apparent to all intelligent students of history; such mixtures have always resulted in weakening, degrading, and dragging down the superior to the level of the inferior race. God had a purpose in making four separate races. The white, the red, the yellow, and the black. God intended that each of the four races should preserve its blood free from mixture with other races

Negro a Beast wholly encapsulates this mentality in the overblown Christian terms of “pure Adamic stock.” White purity can only be “destroyed by amalgamation,” insists Carroll, and, if it occurs, “the doom of that nation is sealed.”⁴⁶⁵ Many Southerners balked at Carroll’s entirely biblical argument, but his extreme views surfaced at a time of extreme racism, and he helped to set the tone for the period’s miscegenation taboo and obsession with the ‘mulatto’.⁴⁶⁶ These fixations were perpetuated by a soon bustling Hollywood. D. W. Griffith’s 1915 *Birth of a Nation* breathed new life into Thomas Dixon’s ‘chivalrous’ hostility toward miscegenation, and even nominally liberal Whites fell prey to the miscegenation scare in films like Stanley Kramer’s absurd 1967 *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner*, which was released months after America’s miscegenation laws were finally struck down.⁴⁶⁷ At least by this time the Southern lynching campaign had more or less run out of steam, and the Black rapist stereotype began to lose its cultural currency to the inner-city thug stereotype.⁴⁶⁸

iii. Thievery: from Slave Resistance to Mass Incarceration

In their discussions of slave management American slaveholders were quite often able to see that their slaves’ thievery stemmed from the planters’ own mismanagement and the

and preserve race integrity and prove itself true to the purpose that God had in mind for each of them when He brought them into being.” *Congressional Record*, 71 Cong., 2 Sess., Oct. 15th, 1929, p. 3234-9, as excerpted in Newby 1968, 124.

⁴⁶⁵ C. Carroll 1900, 186-8

⁴⁶⁶ Fredrickson 1971, 130-8

⁴⁶⁷ Nobody has treated the propagandistic elements of these films more deftly or honestly than James Baldwin (Baldwin 1976, 45-59).

⁴⁶⁸ It never fully faded away, and probably never will. On June 17th, 2015, White 21-year-old Dylann Roof shot dead at least 9 individuals inside the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, and he is reported to have said to a survivor, whom he kept alive “to tell everyone what happened,” that he had to commit these murders because “You rape our women and you’re taking over our country. And you have to go.” Bluestone, Gabrielle, *Gawker Media*, June 18th, 2015: <http://goo.gl/nerYM4>.

constraints of slave life.⁴⁶⁹ About the theft of food planters were especially willing to admit that the slaves' pilfering was caused by an inadequate diet, and they seem to have punished such theft with relative lenience, commonly opting to simply increase rations.⁴⁷⁰ So explains Charles Joyner of typical South Carolina rice plantations, such as the Brookgreen plantation, where, when slaves broke into the barn to steal rice, the mistress "told the overseers that the slaves should be given more rice rather than being punished for trying to steal it."⁴⁷¹ Planters, after all, prided themselves on an image of smooth running plantations and well-fed slaves. This is likely why some observers understood slaves' thievery as a form of resistance, having taken at face value planter's claims about adequately feeding their slaves.⁴⁷² For example, a travel writer covering South Carolina

⁴⁶⁹ Thomas Jefferson explained that the thievishness would turn up in anyone forced to live in slave or slave-like conditions: "That disposition to theft with which they have been branded, must be ascribed to their situation, and not to any depravity of the moral sense. The man, in whose favour no laws of property exist, probably feels himself less bound to respect those made in favour of others. . . . That a change in the relations in which a man is placed should change his ideas of moral right and wrong, is neither new, nor peculiar to the colour of the blacks." (Jefferson 1788, 152)

⁴⁷⁰ This isn't to say that all planters were so reasonable. Some went so far as to ban their slaves from cultivating the customary small garden plots near their cabins and using the produce to trade for "tobacco and Sunday finery." Such planters claimed that "the practice is a bad one," for "they will pilfer to add to what cotton or corn they have made. . . . They will have many things in their possession, under colour of purchases, which we know not whether they have obtained honestly." (Olmsted [1861] 1966, 482, quoting an article out of an undated *Southern Cultivator*) Ex-slave Gus Feaster remembered that his "Marse Tom never whipped 'bout nothing much but stealing. . . . He burnt you up 'bout stealing, dat he would." WPA *Slave Narratives*, vol. 14, part 2, 50

⁴⁷¹ Joyner 1984, 97. Joyner also quotes Ben Horry, one of that plantation's slaves, as recalling: "Anybody steal rice and they beat them, Miss Bessie cry and say, 'Let 'em have rice! My rice—my nigger!'" WPA *Slave Narratives*, vol. 14, part 2, 317. This is precisely the sentiment shared by a North Carolina mistress, who, when presented with a slave stealing potatoes, simply said, "Joe belongs to me, the tater belongs to me, take it back and cook it for him." WPA *Slave Narratives*, vol. 11, part 1, 411-2.

⁴⁷² Olmsted skewers these claims, frustrated by how often they were put to him. He admits that "I have, in times past, taken its truth for granted, and repeated it myself. Such is the effect of the continued iteration of falsehood." He then explains that he had either "received reliable and unprejudiced information in the matter" or had "examined personally" the diets of all the Free States (except California), Canada, Great Britain, Germany, France, and Belgium, and that this had proven to him that "the condition of the labourer, as respects food... is, in the large majority of cases, much better than that of the majority of slaves." (Olmsted [1861] 1966, 485) His only exception is England. Eugene Genovese fell into this trap, cherry-picking just five WPA narratives in which ex-slaves make off-handed remarks about not going hungry. To me, he seems to downplay degrading plantation conditions so as to bolster his claim that slave thievery was a form of resistance that was more sport than necessity and hence "inevitably weakened [slaves'] self-respect and their ability to forge a collective discipline appropriate to the long-term demands of their

in 1831 rationalised slave thievery as follows: “Slavery seldom fortifies honesty; and, besides, the slave may fancy that it is just to make reprisals on his master’s property for violence done to his own person.”⁴⁷³

I am hesitant to call food theft straightforward resistance, however, because slaves’ biographies make it clear that their thievery was almost always motivated by hunger or the monotony of the fare provided by their masters. Many of the interviewed ex-slaves claimed to have been well-fed themselves, but such claims likely stemmed from their knowledge of other plantations where the slaves were even worse off and would have starved without a theft-supplemented diet. For example, South Carolinian Ellen Godfrey told her WPA interviewer that “Doctor McGill people hab to steal for someting to eat!”⁴⁷⁴ North Carolinian Louisa Adams similarly reported, “We were so hongry we were bound to steal or parish. ...Our food wuz bad. Marster worked us hard and gave us nuthin.”⁴⁷⁵

national liberation.” All these men and women, chastises Genovese, should have, like “the very best of the slaves,” recognised that “there were better ways to live,” as though it were moral superiority and not military power, violent institutionalised controls, and racist propaganda that most girded White supremacy (Genovese 1974, 603-9). Anthropometrics for American slaves consistently demonstrate that Black men and women were on average an inch or more shorter than American Whites, but somewhat taller than British and Western European subjects because the antebellum South was far more agriculturally rich than Europe. American Black-White height disparity can be broadly attributed to diet and living conditions, especially since slaves’ stunted heights and early mortality were exasperated on large cost-cutting plantations (Margo and Steckel 1982; Komlos 1992; Carson 2009; Carson 2010). As far as most slaves could see, their diet fell short of their country’s labourers’ standards (not just “their own standards”—“the slaves loved good food too much”—as Genovese would have it).

⁴⁷³ G. M., “South-Carolina,” *New England Magazine* 1 (September, October 1831): 246-50, 337-41; as excerpted in Schwaab and Bull 1973, 1.239.

⁴⁷⁴ WPA *Slave Narratives*, vol. 14, part 2, 159 & 161. (Joyner 1984, 106)

⁴⁷⁵ WPA *Slave Narratives*, vol. 11, part 1, 2. Cf. Frederick Douglass’ similar experience: “We were allowed less than a half of a bushel of corn-meal per week, and very little else, either in the shape of meat or vegetables. It was not enough for us to subsist upon. We were therefore reduced to the wretched necessity of living at the expense of our neighbors. This we did by begging and stealing, whichever came handy in the time of need, the one being considered as legitimate as the other. A great many times have we poor creatures been nearly perishing with hunger, when food in abundance lay mouldering in the safe and smoke-house, and our pious mistress was aware of the fact; and yet that mistress and her husband would kneel every morning, and pray that God would bless them in basket and store!” (Douglass 1984, 63-4) Cf. Solomon Northup: “That summer the worms got into the bacon. Nothing but ravenous hunger could induce us to swallow it. The weekly allowance of meat scarcely sufficed to satisfy us. It was customary... where the allowance is exhausted before Saturday night, or is in such a state as to render it nauseous and

Henry Bobbitt remembered that if he and his fellow-slaves wanted meat in their diet, they had to supply it themselves: “We warn't 'lowed ter have no gyarden, ner chickens, ner pigs. ... We had ter steal what rabbits we et from somebody elses boxes on some udder plantation, case de massa won't let us have none o' our own.”⁴⁷⁶ In Tennessee Robert Falls recalled that “they didn’t half feed us either. They fed the animals better. ... *Learned us to steal, that’s what they done*. Why we would take anything we could lay our hands on, when we was hungry.”⁴⁷⁷ The other major motivation for slaves’ thieving was to secure enough money to buy liquor, the consumption of which was often strictly regulated or simply forbidden.⁴⁷⁸ Liquor, as a source of entertainment or emotional relief, could be considered a necessity for those stuck in a life of servitude. Some slaves and slaveholders certainly thought so. As with the theft of food, theft of liquor was a symptom of the actively instilled and enforced deprivation that typified slaves’ lives.

Unfortunately, many Whites refused to grapple with their role in creating circumstances in which slaves’ thievery would flourish, and so they fell back upon racist stereotypes about Black people’s supposedly natural thievishness. In this way, their guilt was assuaged, their sense of moral superiority stroked, and so they continued to perpetuate the constraining management practices that drove the enslaved to steal. In 1833, for example, a Virginian planter named Claiborne W. Gooch wrote an extensive essay on agriculture, a good deal of which was concerned with the management of

disgusting, to hunt in the swamps for coon and opossum. ... There are planters whose slaves, for months at a time, have no other meat than such as is obtained in this manner.” (Northup [1853] 1970, 200)

⁴⁷⁶ WPA *Slave Narratives*, vol. 11, part 1, 122

⁴⁷⁷ WPA *Slave Narratives*, vol. 15, 12; emphasis mine.

⁴⁷⁸ Some masters used liquor as a reward after sugar cane harvests or corn shucking, or as a holiday treat: WPA *Slave Narratives*, vol. 1, 151, 155, 307, & 418; vol. 11, part 1, 106-7, 243, 265, 406, & 418; vol. 16, part 1, 80, 131, 206, 258. Other masters banned it outright, and most did not allow for its consumption outside of holidays or rewards, considering it to be a threat to productivity: vol. 14, part 2, 300, 308, & 325; vol. 11, part 1, 459; vol. 16, part 1, 247.

plantation slaves. In it he complained that “there seems to be almost an entire absence of moral principle among the mass of our colored population. ... To steal and not be detected is a moral among them.”⁴⁷⁹ Samuel Cartwright took the stereotype to a whole new level, attempting to bring to it an air of medical legitimacy. One of the uniquely Black diseases he ‘identified’ was called *dysaesthesia*, the biological ‘symptom’ of which is that “the blood becomes so highly carbonised and deprived of oxygen, that it not only becomes unfit to stimulate the brain to energy, but unfit to stimulate the nerves of sensation distributed to the body.” Cartwright offers no logical link of these supposed symptoms to thievery, but nevertheless the slave ‘suffering’ from *dysaesthesia*, “when aroused from his sloth by the stimulus of hunger, he takes anything he can lay his hands on, and tramples on the rights, as well as on the property of others, with perfect indifference as to consequences.”⁴⁸⁰

American fiction also adhered to this paradigm, denigrating the enslaved as naturally disposed to theft rather than as reacting to oppressive economic conditions. In William Gilmore Simms’ *Golden Christmas*, the narrator describes the hog-stealing Jehu by remarking that “it was a law of his nature that he should steal it,” and Jehu’s own words work to present his thievery as a natural part of his character: “I can’t help it—I must tiew pig. ... Der’s someting mek me do it, maussa.”⁴⁸¹ When blackface minstrel shows needed to take a break from their usual, pat romance songs and complacent ‘plantation

⁴⁷⁹ C. W. Gooch, *Lynchburg Virginian*, July 4th, 1833, p. 1. Cf. Botume 1893, 279. Several scholarly works, none of which cite Gooch’s original newspaper article, have changed “moral among them” to “merit among them.” See: Stamp 1956, 125; Harrison 1893, 103; Du Bois 1903, 54.

⁴⁸⁰ Cartwright, Samuel A., *Report on the Diseases and Physical Peculiarities of the Negro Race* (1851), as reprinted in Caplan, McCartney and Sisti 2004, 28-39, esp. 36.

⁴⁸¹ Simms 1852, 166-7. Cf. W.L.G. Smith 1852, 47. A few ex-slaves’ narratives show that some slaves internalised these naturalising stereotypes. One from Tennessee said, “It is just natural for Negroes to steal. Our folks would do it, and they had plenty.” Fisk University, *Unwritten History of Slavery*, 1945, 4-5 (as quoted and cited in Genovese 1974, 606, n. 35).

melodies', they liked to toy with the 'thievish Negro' stereotype. One of George Christy's songs, called *Come back, Stephen!*, regaled his audience with Stephen's pilfering exploits, singing, "Stephen, you are de very man dat stole massa's blue coat... dat old woman's leadder spectacles... dat sheep-skin, to strek ober dat banjo... [and old Mrs. Godfrey's] brass wash-kettle, and took part of it to make dem jingles out of what's now on dat tamborine." Not even 1,700 lashes from his master could subdue Stephen's robber heart.⁴⁸²

Even well-meaning abolitionist authors failed to shake off this naturally thievish stereotype. Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is a big offender. Stowe presents the reader with two contrasting children characters: the angelic, "Christ-like," White planter's daughter, Eva, and the impish, never-was-born, thievish slave, Topsy. The novel is particularly interested in extent to which education and upbringing shapes the character of a child, and Topsy is brought into the narrative as an "experiment" meant to find out whether Miss Ophelia's attentions or her scripture and craft-based education, which served St. Clare just fine in his childhood, will have an effect on "so depraved a child." They do not. While St. Clare is insistent that children like Topsy are "made" through mistreatment at the hands of cruel masters, her relatively good treatment in St. Clare's household produces no change in her character.⁴⁸³ Instead, it is only when Eva, inching closer to death, tearfully begs Topsy to stop her pranks and petty theft *for Eva's sake* that Topsy reforms her behaviour. "A ray of real belief, a ray of heavenly love" then penetrates "the darkness of her heathen soul," and Topsy promises to try to be good so as

⁴⁸² Christy and White 1854, 1.39-41. Cf. *Sugar Can Green*, Ibid. 2.27.

⁴⁸³ Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* 1852, 2.32-52

not to disappoint Eva or Jesus.⁴⁸⁴ By carrying a lock of Eva's hair as a reminder to resist bad influences, Topsy fights her innate, naturally thievish tendencies, not for the benefit of her own morals, self-respect, or reputation in her community, but in order not to let down the "Christ-like" Eva and the novel's White Jesus. She is taught nothing. She is guilted into conformity. She is converted to Eva's Christianity.⁴⁸⁵ But does Eva similarly need to steel herself against corrupting influences, such as slaveholding? Is there any "diablerie" lurking beneath her religious devotion? No, says St. Clare, "evil rolls off Eva's mind like dew off a cabbage-leaf,—not a drop sinks in. ...if Eva could have been spoiled, it would have been done years ago."⁴⁸⁶

After the Civil War stereotypes about Black criminality took on even more importance for the ruling ideology. Black life in general became criminalised. Virtually every Southern state by 1865 had passed vagrancy laws aimed either explicitly or implicitly at Black folks. These laws required Black individuals to be able to produce, at any time, proof that they were employed. Some states, like Mississippi, even required Black workers to have entered into a labour contract with a White employer by January 1st, or

⁴⁸⁴ Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* 1852, 2.92-5

⁴⁸⁵ George Aiken's adaptation of the novel for the stage is particularly blunt on this theme. Eva says to Topsy: "I want you to be good. I wish you would try to be good for my sake...you can be one of those spirits bright Uncle Tom sings about!" After Eva's death, Topsy soliloquises: "I haven't done anything wrong since poor Miss Eva went up in de skies and left us. When I's gwine to do anything wicked, I tinks of her, and somehow I can't do it. ...I 'spects when I's dead I shall be turned into a little brack angel." (Aiken 2005, 205, 226)

⁴⁸⁶ Stowe 1852, 2.47. This uncomfortable contrast between Eva and Topsy is one of the novel's expressions of the ethos behind Stowe's desire to colonise ex-slaves in Liberia. See these revealing passages: 1.259, 2.302-3, 2.318. Cf. the eerily similar sentiments of proslavery ideologues: Shaler, N. S., "The Nature of the Negro," *Arena*, vol. III (December 1890), pp. 23-35, excerpted in Newby 1968, 58; Schoolcraft 1860, vii; Dixon, Thomas, *Atlanta Constitution*, Oct. 29, 1905, p. 2. As cultural historian Josephine Donovan explains, Stowe exhibits a sort of *romantic racialism* that imagines all races to have characteristics that will allow them to attain cultural greatness if fostered properly—i.e. as Christians and in Africa, in Stowe's view of Black Americans. (Donovan 1995)

else they would be arrested.⁴⁸⁷ One justification for such statutes was the stereotype that Black men and women, if not kept constantly busy and supervised by White men, would fall back into criminal behaviour to fund ‘degenerate’ habits, just like the slave Hector in Smith’s *Life at the South* feared that he would happen to him without the supervision of his master. Of course, according to Whites, Black criminality included proclivity for rape and violence on top of theft. This stereotype paradigm was used to mask the fact that, in reality, these laws had been instituted to guarantee that police institutions would have enough legal leeway to round up sufficiently large groups of Black men and women needed to populate the chain-gangs and peon groups which were exploited in the period’s widespread forced labour systems used to create an historically unparalleled economic inequality.⁴⁸⁸ The stereotype allowed Whites to delude themselves into thinking that convict labour—the mortality rate of which rose at times to over 40 percent⁴⁸⁹—utilised only ‘bad’ people who deserved this hellish punishment and loss of freedom, and 90 percent of whom just happened to be Black.⁴⁹⁰ Similarly, White urban populations asserted Black criminality as a key reason for segregation, and city realtors made recourse to such prejudice to justify their refusal to offer Black families residences in

⁴⁸⁷ Blackmon 2008, 53; Du Bois 1935, 173-6

⁴⁸⁸ As W.E.B. Du Bois so eloquently put it: “Hundreds of Southern fortunes have been amassed by this enslavement of criminals.” (Du Bois 1935, 699) Douglas Blackmon writes on corrupt legal officials’ role in providing the force labour system with its workers: “The job of a county sheriff became a heady enterprise, often more akin to the business of trading in mules than law enforcement. Sheriffs and their local judges developed special relationships with local companies and preferred acquirers of their prisoners. Arrests surged and fell, not as acts of crime increased or receded, but in tandem to the varying needs of the buyers of labor.” (Blackmon 2008, 65-6)

⁴⁸⁹ Du Bois quotes George Cable as unexaggeratedly claiming “the year’s death rate of the convict camps of Louisiana must exceed that of any pestilence that ever fell upon Europe in the Middle Ages.” (Du Bois 1935, 699) Blackmon writes that “in the first two years that Alabama leased its prisoners, nearly 20 percent of them died. In the following year, mortality rose to 35 percent. In the fourth, nearly 45 percent were killed.” (Blackmon 2008, 57)

⁴⁹⁰ Blackmon 2008, 57, 393-4

even moderately up-kept, predominantly White neighbourhoods.⁴⁹¹ By ghettoising the Black urban population, Whites actively plunged them into socio-economic conditions that ensured higher rates of theft, which served to reinforce in the White imagination connections between criminality and Blackness.

As Khalil Muhammad explains in his modern classic, *The Condemnation of Blackness*, the major innovation of the pre-Civil Rights Act period was not so much the content of anti-Black criminality stereotyping, but in the approach to constructing it. The White supremacists of this period, no longer content to rely on anecdotes, staked their racism on science and misconstrued statistics.⁴⁹² For example, Frederick Hoffman, a German immigrant, rose to fame in the very late 19th century for his book, *Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro*. In it he compiled arrest statistics with the aim of demonstrating that Blacks committed a disproportionate amount of theft, murder, arson, and rape, and that this heightened criminality was a racial characteristic rather than a function of the defeat of Reconstruction's economic reforms and of the degrading socio-economic and housing conditions in which Black folk were forced to live.⁴⁹³ Through appeals to these conditions, contemporary anti-racist scholars, such as W.E.B. Du Bois, were quick to counter Hoffman's data interpretation. After all, as the scholars pointed out, crime rates were similar for immigrant White populations who lived in conditions similar to that of Black Americans. But such criticism fell on deaf ears. Hoffman's work, and indeed his statistical approach to racism in general, lent a dispassionate, scientific

⁴⁹¹ Gerber 1976, 101-10; Rosenbaum and Friedman 2007, 184-9; Nightingale 2012, 341-58

⁴⁹² Muhammad 2010, esp. 35-87

⁴⁹³ For example, he wrote that arrest statistics from across the nation and census data "show without exception that the criminality of the negro exceeds that of any other race of any numerical importance in this country. ...in this respect education has utterly failed to raise the negro to a higher level of citizenship, the first duty of which is to obey the laws and respect the lives and property of others." (Hoffman 1896, 228)

vener to claims about the necessity of anti-Black discriminatory practices—even increases in Blacks’ education and Church membership could be brought under fire as detriments to society in that their increase correlated with the increased Black arrest rates of the time. Obstacles to adequate Black education, housing, and enfranchisement, as well as America’s discriminatory policing resulting in Blacks’ higher arrest rates, were thus rationalised as responses to Black criminality rather than its causes.

Unfortunately, anti-racist activists have failed to defeat this statistical line of thinking, and with it the news media continues to defend discriminatory law enforcement. Bill O’Reilly, for example, relishes any opportunity to trot out statistics that purport to show that “there’s a reason why more young Black men are in prison. There’s a reason why police are more cautious while approaching a Black man in a car; and the reason is: overwhelmingly, violent crime in this country is generated by young black men.”⁴⁹⁴ Reagan’s former Secretary of Education, William Bennett, in a PR disaster, similarly asserted in 2005 that “if you wanted to reduce crime... you could abort every black baby in this country, and your crime rate would go down.”⁴⁹⁵ It can only be hoped that the current wave of anti-racist protests directed toward the wildly disproportionate number of police killings of Black individuals and toward racial incarceration—which every year strips the right to vote from thousands of often-innocent Black folks—will manage to unseat America’s preoccupation with stereotypical Black criminality and replace it with a focus on reforming the continuing, grave socio-economic disparity between White and Black, rich and poor, that creates crime-inducing desperation.

⁴⁹⁴ Fox News, *O’Reilly Factor*, July 9th, 2013, interviewing Rev. Jacques Degraff.

⁴⁹⁵ Salem Radio Network, *Bill Bennett’s Morning in America*, September 28th, 2005—as transcribed in Seifter, Andrew. *Media Matters*, September 28th, 2005: <http://goo.gl/ueHz6t>

IV. Loyalty

i. Mammy: Naturalised Familial Devotion

In the 1830s abolitionists began to turn slaveholder's Jezebel stereotype against them. Planters had portrayed Black women as impossibly sensual and scheming, and abolition rhetoric wondered aloud how these gentlemen could put such women to work as servants in their households without morally corrupting the White children. Planter propaganda struck back with the image of Mammy: the self-sacrificing, loyal, loving, and stern yet jovial domestic slave. Mammy ruled the Big House's kitchen, commanded the plantation's staff of slaves, nursed her owners' children, and instilled in them the social mores commensurate with their station. In everything except colour, she was the tireless, ideal 19th century helpmeet. Although she was an effective counter to prewar abolitionist rhetoric, she was no more real than Jezebel. She was also an exaggeration developed out of the circumstances into which masters forced domestic servants. She was loving and stern because her owners required a nurse and guardian, self-sacrificing because they required around-the-clock service, and jovial because they demanded constantly obsequious conduct. As fondly as many planters' children in the postwar period conjured up memories of powerful Mammies—a select few ex-slaves also remembered privileged Mammies—antebellum documentary sources such as planter mistresses' diaries and other ex-slaves' interviews prove that the majority of slaveholding households had no single individual like an untiring and in-control Mammy. The work of superintending a plantation was great, and it was very often undertaken by the mistress herself, cleaning and commanding the household staff, sewing and directing the household's seamstresses, cooking and running the kitchen, as well as nursing and socialising the White and Black children. Typically all of this work would be divided between the mistress and many

different slaves, and so the all-capable Mammy was more of a comforting stereotype than a reflection of antebellum Southern life.⁴⁹⁶

Two cultural trends converged to guide the creation of this Mammy stereotype. The first was that proslavery propaganda had begun to trumpet the South's 'peculiar institution' as a 'positive good'. Mammy was trotted out as proof that slavery Christianised and civilised Black folk, and so improved a slave was said likewise to improve her masters through her obsession with social propriety and her homespun religious wisdom.⁴⁹⁷ The second trend was maternal sentimentalism, a literary phenomenon in which authors, male and female, Northern and Southern, idealised Christian motherhood and prescribed its values as a solution for what they perceived to be moral shortcomings in the country's patriarchal capitalism and social structure.⁴⁹⁸ This latter trend is the primary reason that the Mammy figure was popular not only in proslavery literature but also in abolitionists' works.

In many respects the Mammy stereotype performs an ideological function similar to that of the ancient, stereotypical *παιδαγωγός*. They are meant to flatter slave owners (or at least the slaving culture) as benevolent. Three tropes concerning the Mammy construct which are significant for that function will be explored below, and this discussion will demonstrate the manners in which the Mammy and *παιδαγωγός* stereotypes align and differ.

⁴⁹⁶ D. G. White 1985, 51-4

⁴⁹⁷ On Mammy as proof of slavery's Christianising influence, see: Jordan-Lake 2005, 65. Thomas Clay's 1833 *Detail of a Plan for the Moral Improvement of Negroes on Plantations* is a particularly good text to demonstrate that all 'improvement' of Black people is to be wrought through the Church. For their instruction, Clay recommends: preaching to slave assemblies on the Sabbath, orally instructing slaves in the meaning of bible passages in Sabbath Schools, similarly instructing slaves during weekday evening meetings, again during short lunch-time meetings, and forming temperance societies for the slaves.

⁴⁹⁸ Ammons 1977; Tompkins 1985; Jacobson 2014; Frick 2012, 10-12, 18-20

The first trope is agedness. Almost invariably the antebellum and postwar depictions of Mammy render her as old. Susan Eppes, a planter's daughter writing after the Civil War, remembered that "Mammy, of the old South, was usually well on in years," and that her estate's Mammy Feriby had been "elderly and dignified."⁴⁹⁹ Antebellum plantation novels adhered to this paradigm. Granny Moll in Tucker's *Valley of Shenandoah*, "old mammy Lucy" in Kennedy's *Swallow Barn*, and Tabitha in Simms' *Golden Christmas* are all well past their prime and complaining about rheumatism, the first two having retired to out-of-the-way cottages. Even Uncle Tom and Aunt Chloe, after they were transferred to the stage, quickly greyed and became senior characters.⁵⁰⁰ On the one hand, care-taker slaves' stereotypical old age likely stems somewhat from the setting of real plantations. Elderly slaves who had ceased being capable manual labourers were typically tasked with nursery duties,⁵⁰¹ and it is natural that, when slave owners drew on childhood memories about Mammies, they remembered senior women—everyone looks old to a toddler.⁵⁰² On the other hand, the old age aspect of this stereotype has clear ideological benefits. Given the antebellum and Jim Crow eras' extreme levels of paranoia about the sexuality of Black men and women, old age served to desexualise care-taker slave characters, a particularly useful function for Jezebel's counter-image to have.⁵⁰³ In the

⁴⁹⁹ Eppes then goes on to explain the exceptional circumstances that permitted an 18 year old slave, Lula, to take over child-care duties after the death of Mammy Feriby.

⁵⁰⁰ Although Stowe had written these characters as middle-aged—Tom was a prized field hand, after all—stage adaptations by 1853, only one year after the novel's complete publications, began to portray Tom and Chloe as white-haired and elderly. (Morgan 2004, 17-20) Part of the impetus for this change was likely to allay any sexual anxieties White audiences might have concerning the intimacy between Tom and Eva.

⁵⁰¹ Joyner 1984, 63, 78; Jones 1985, 29

⁵⁰² D. G. White 1985, 60

⁵⁰³ Ibid. 60

ancient Greek context, where slave sexuality was less feared, it is notable that the *παιδαγωγός* seems not to have undergone such aging desexualisation.⁵⁰⁴

In both contexts, however, stereotypes about care-taker slaves' old age and about masters' favoured treatment of them in retirement worked to portray slaveholders as benevolent. In America they were wielded to portray the whole institution of slavery as a 'positive good'. One of the most-used proslavery arguments was that slavery secured for the enslaved care-free golden years. Novelist Mary Schoolcraft proudly proclaimed that planters upheld their promises of caring for old slaves: "Palsied be the tongue that says a negro is not clothed, fed, and taken care of in sickness, in health, and old age. ... The master who did not give to his old slave the very same amount of clothing, food, and every other attention that he does to the young, would be scorned by his neighbors as a low-lived wretch."⁵⁰⁵ This is precisely the impression that male-authored antebellum plantation novels give their readers, in that visitors' plantation tours, a mainstay trope of the genre, almost always end with a visit to the cabin of a retired, rheumatic Mammy, thereby impressing on the visitors and readers that planters continued to provide for their slaves long after the slaves had ceased being useful labourers. In the *Valley of Shenandoah*, the visiting Northerner is shown the 84 year old Granny Mott's cabin and how a slave has been assigned to tend to her needs, and in *Swallow Barn* the exact same

⁵⁰⁴ Consider that the Daos of Menander's *Shield* was young enough to go off to war alongside his ward. Tragic care-taker slaves tend to be much older, but so too their wards.

⁵⁰⁵ Schoolcraft 1860, 79-80. She goes on to quote a certain Dr. Adams, who says that the South has "a respectable colored population, every individual of which is under the responsible oversight of a master or mistress, who restrains and governs him, and has a reputation to maintain in his respectable appearance and comfort, and keep him from being a burden on the community." Cf. Andrews 1908, 101-2

situation plays out with “old mammy Lucy.”⁵⁰⁶ The mammies’ well-appointed cabins drive home the planter families’ benevolence.⁵⁰⁷

These romantic accounts are undermined by less biased non-fiction sources. By and large, planters were not actually willing to expend resources on slaves past their prime. The medical care, housing, and feeding of old slaves was often little more than perfunctory. In sources critical of slavery, mammies’ out-of-the-way cabins take on a sinister character. For example, when Frances Kemble examined her husband’s plantation, she found the set of slave houses reserved for the elderly slaves to be “deplorably miserable hovels, which appeared to me to be chiefly occupied by the most decrepid [sic] and infirm samples of humanity it was ever my melancholy lot to behold.” Among these hovels live “two very aged women,” and “one of these old crones, a hideous, withered, wrinkled piece of womanhood, said that she had worked as long as her strength had lasted.” This comment was “followed up by piteous complaints of hunger and rheumatism, and their usual requests for pittances of food and clothing.”⁵⁰⁸ Frederick

⁵⁰⁶ Tucker [1824] 1970, 1.81ff; J. Kennedy [1853] 1962, 461ff

⁵⁰⁷ Tucker’s description of Granny Mott’s cabin is restrained, but still stands in stark contrast with the description of elderly slave housing and the slave infirmary at Francis Kemble’s plantation (see: p. 174, n. 507). Mott’s home is “a low cabin made of hewn logs, notched at the ends so as nearly to touch; and the more effectually to excludethe cold and the air, the small spaces between were filled in with mud.” It is kept tidy by Mott’s granddaughter, “a tidy mulatto girl of fourteen,” and a slave named Joe is tasked with fetching her firewood. (Tucker [1824] 1970, 1.81-3)

⁵⁰⁸ Kemble 1863, 92; cf. her comments on the estate’s slave infirmary: “I found, on entering the first ward—to use a most inapplicable term for the dark, filthy, forlorn room I have so christened—an old negro called Friday lying on the ground. I asked what ailed him, and was told he was dying. ...His tattered shirt and trowsers [sic] barely covered his poor body; his appearance was that of utter exhaustion from age and feebleness; he had nothing under him but a mere handful of straw that did not cover the earth he was stretched on; and under his head, by way of pillow for his dying agony, two or three rough sticks just raising his skull a few inches from the ground. The flies were all gathering around his mouth, and not a creature was near him. There he lay—the worn-out slave, whose life had been spent in unrequited labor for me and mine, without one physical alleviation, one Christian solace, one human sympathy, to cheer him in his extremity—panting out the last breath of his wretched existence like some forsaken, overworked, wearied-out beast of burden, rotting where it falls! ...In the next room I found a miserable, decrepid [sic] old negress, called Charity, lying sick, and I should think near too to die; but she did not think her work was over, much as she looked unfit for farther work on earth; but with feeble voice and beseeching hands implored me to have her work lightened when she was sent back to it from the hospital.” (p. 246-7)

Douglass remembered similarly the hut constructed for his own grandmother's 'retirement': "her present owners finding she was of but little value... took her to the woods, built her a little hut, put up a little mud-chimney, and then made her welcome to the privilege of supporting herself there in perfect loneliness; thus virtually turning her out to die!" She received this damnable 'privilege' after she had nursed her infant master, been his faithful maid, and populated his plantation with two generations of children, who were "divided, like so many sheep, without being gratified with the small privilege of a single word, as to their or her own destiny."⁵⁰⁹

It is difficult to compare the relationship that America's all-capable and cared-for Mammy stereotype has with the reality of the country's typically cruel treatment of elderly slaves with the relationship that Greece's *παιδαγωγός* stereotype had with the reality of its society's old slave treatment. Both the fictional and documentary sources for the Greek context provide only examples of lasting affection and favoured treatment.⁵¹⁰ Like the Mammy stereotype, the cared-for *παιδαγωγός* stereotype may mask a reality of turned-out-to-die, elderly slaves, but there is no evidence for such a reality. Perhaps the Greeks simply did treat old slaves with reverential affection. As flattering as the cared-for *παιδαγωγός* figure was to slaveholders' benevolence, ancient authors do not seem to present old slaves' treatment as a paternalistic 'duty' so much as part of the incentives with which masters attempted to motivate their labourers. Xenophon explains that not

⁵⁰⁹ Douglass 1855, 180. Cf. Stroyer 1885, 80-1, where the slaveholder drunkenly murders his "Aunt Betty, the only mother he knew." It is quotes like these that make me doubt Eugene Genovese's assertion that "Mammies did not often have to worry about being sold or about having their husbands or children sold. The sacrifices they made for the whites earned them genuine affection in return, which provided a guarantee of protection, safety, and privilege for their own children." (Genovese 1974, 357) The historian, despite his (unquoted) hedging, seems to tread awfully close to proslavery propaganda reasoning. Cf. The 'concluding remarks' of Mary Eastman's proslavery novel, *Aunt Phillis' Cabin*: "No master would be brutish enough to sell the slave who had nursed him and his children, who loved him like a son, even for urgent debt, had he another article of property in the wide world." (Eastman 1852, 266)

⁵¹⁰ Demosthenes 47.55; Herodotus 8.75; Euripides *Ion* 738ff; E. E. Cohen 2000, 146

only does he provide his slaves with incentives of better food and clothes for the more productive slaves, but he also favours his bailiffs—privileged, estate-running servants—by enriching them and treating them like *kaloι kagathoi*.⁵¹¹ American planters also understood that a cared-for retirement would be a powerful incentive for slaves to remain loyal and productive. Mary Schoolcraft, for example, wrote that slaves “would become dissatisfied, did they not know that old age and sickness would never find them without every comfort they enjoyed in health.”⁵¹² I think that the difference between the two societies’ cared-for slave stereotypes is subtle. Since the Greek slaveholders were less concerned with presenting slavery as a ‘positive good’, they use the elderly παιδαγωγός figure to reflect benevolence in individual slaveholders, whereas American planters tried to deceive themselves and observers into believing that their slavery was itself a benevolent institution. The regularity of Greeks’ manumitting their beloved slave caretakers signals that the Greeks did not similarly view their slavery as intrinsically benevolent.⁵¹³

The second trope that underlies the function of the Mammy and παιδαγωγός stereotypes is how the slaves are portrayed as ‘part of the family’. The most obvious manifestation of this trope in both contexts is the use of familial titles. Elderly American slaves become Mammies, Aunties, Uncles, Grannies, and Granddaddies. Slaves are presented with just as much familial attachment to their wards. For example, in the *Valley of Shenandoah* Granny Moll dotes over her mistress’ daughter as if she were her own,

⁵¹¹ Xenophon *Oeconomicus* 12-14

⁵¹² Schoolcraft 1860, 80

⁵¹³ Rihl 2011, 56-8: “Manumission was apparently common in Classical Athens.”

saying. “How should I do without *my* Louisa? God bless *my* child!”⁵¹⁴ The Greek sources also adhere to this sort of familial affection. Euripides’ Creusa tends to her tutor as she would a father, and he returns her affection by calling her “daughter.”⁵¹⁵ When Daos and Kleostratos reunite with an embrace in Menander’s *Shield*, they carry on very similarly to Aunt Phillis and Alice Weston in Mary Eastman’s *Aunt Phillis’ Cabin*, where their reunion is described in warm, familial language: “Never did mother hold to her heart a child dearer to her, than Phillis, when she pressed Alice to her bosom.”⁵¹⁶ In both contexts, familial titles and affection are used to obscure the fact that the master-slave relationship is pecuniary and exploitative.

Where the two contexts diverge is in the American stereotype’s insistence that Mammies belonged more to their owners’ family than to their own, and that this was a natural characteristic of Black people, one which rendered them fit for servitude. For example, in *Aunt Phillis’ Cabin* the planter Arthur Weston soliloquises on how in the past “Phillis sat at her cabin door, with Arthur (a baby) in her arms, and her own child, almost the same age, in the cradle near them. She has been no eye-servant. ...She always gave Arthur the preference, putting her own infant aside to attend to his own wants.”⁵¹⁷ In *The Black Gauntlet* Mary Schoolcraft’s general comments on care-taker slaves similarly assert that Mammies preferred their White charges. She claims that “a mistress *there* [S. Carolina] universally takes more care of her little negro property, than a black mother

⁵¹⁴ Tucker, *The Valley of Shenandoah* [1824] 1970, 2.199. Cf. other novels’ Mammies use of the diminutive “honey” (J. Kennedy [1853] 1962, 463; Pynelle [1882] 1980, 36-7, 45, etc.) Cf. the retired slave nurse in *The Kentuckian in New-York*, who allows a pair of young lovers to use her cabin as a secret rendezvous, owing to “a most parental regard for the young lady.” (Caruthers 1834, 2.124)

⁵¹⁵ Euripides *Ion* 735: ὃ θύγατερ.

⁵¹⁶ Eastman 1852, 248

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.* 253. Cf. Schoolcraft 1860, 45

ever does of her children,” and that “the wide world does not contain a more affectionate, unselfish foster-mother, than the black family-servant; indeed, the author has often seen more violent grief over the death of their white foster-child than she ever witnessed over the corpse of one of their own.”⁵¹⁸ Of course, a Mammy’s devotion was not limited to her White charges; she could at the same time love her master and mistress just as strongly. In *The Planter’s Northern Bride* Caroline Hentz purports to report the words of a nameless “negro woman:” “I wouldn’t have left my master and mistress for all the freedom in the world. I’d left my own father and mother first. I loved ’em better than I done them. I loved their children too. Every one of ’em has been babies in my arms—and I loved ’em a heap better than I done my own.”⁵¹⁹ Later, the novel’s “old Aunt Dicey” is described as having “devoted the vigour of her youth” in service to her master, and she “looks upon [her White charges] with worshipping tenderness.”⁵²⁰

As historian-theologian Joy Jordan-Lake explains, proslavery authors, especially Southern women writers, developed a “theology of whiteness,” in which the white male planter was a blessed figure that approached godhood himself and hence deserved the same sort of unwavering faith from lesser beings (all Black people, all women) as was demanded by God. In the 19th century Christian mindset such a hierarchical, up-flowing reverence appeared natural. So when Hentz utilises language like “devoted” and “worshipping” to describe a Mammy’s servitude, she is attempting to religiously

⁵¹⁸ Schoolcraft 1860, 45 & 205. “The affection thus germinated between the nurse and the child never becomes obliterated while life lasts; and in all the South, not a man could be found who would neglect or ill-use his slave foster-mother when she is advanced in years.” (p. 206) Cf. Olmsted: “I have been told by more than one lady that she was sure her nurse did not have half the affection for her own children that she died for her mistress’s.” (Olmsted [1856] 1968, 555-6)

⁵¹⁹ Hentz 1854, vii-viii. “These are her own words. We have not sought this simple instance of faithful and enduring love. It came to us as if in corroboration of our previous remarks, and we could not help recording it.” (p. viii)

⁵²⁰ Ibid. 233

naturalise the master-slave relationship as analogous to the God-human relationship, that is, as worship on a smaller scale.⁵²¹ Furthermore, loving devotion to the White male planter-god becomes a Christian duty, a requirement of the slave's station, and also the reason why planters appreciate their Mammies. That is, these proslavery authors establish that planters 'love' of their caretaker slaves *qua* slaves.⁵²² The Greeks never went so far.⁵²³ Even Aristotle, who does lay down a role for slaves in the *Politics*' natural order, insists explicitly that the master-slave relationship is distinct, no mere miniaturisation of some other power dynamic, and certainly not one approaching religious worship.⁵²⁴ He is also insistent that while slaves can be appreciated for their function as living tools, a master only develops φίλια with his slave *qua* man, connecting over what they have in common as men instead of the statuses that differentiate them.⁵²⁵ In religiously

⁵²¹ Jordan-Lake 2005, vii, 75-6

⁵²² *Aunt Phillis' Cabin's* Arthur Weston, for example, praises the Mammy as follows: "We have a servant woman named Phillis, her price is far above rubies. Her industry, her honesty, her attachment to our family, exceeds every thing. ... She is a slave here, but she is destined to be a saint hereafter." (Eastman 1852, 137) As Joy Jordan Lake argues, "Phillis's spiritual values all center on her proper relation to her economic and racial superiors. She is admirable *because* she is fond of the planter family, *because* she has earned their trust, *because* she sang to the children." I.e. she is appreciated and loved *qua* slave. (Jordan-Lake 2005, 65)

⁵²³ To be fair, very few Greek sources even present a slave with family. It is interesting that Greek slaves are almost never presented as having attachments outside of their owners' family, though I doubt that had so strong an ideological effect as explicitly making slaves' love for their owners deeper than that for their own flesh and blood. After all, Comedic slaves never come close to that level of literally religious devotion—perhaps with the exception of the *Ephesian Tale's* suicidal παιδαγωγός—and Tragic masters and mistresses are rarely such paragons of virtue that their slaves would worship them. Arguably Andromache is more attached to her child by Neoptolemus than she is to him or Hermione, but it does not feel fair to compare newly captured slaves with the usually house-born Mammies.

⁵²⁴ Aristotle *Politics* 1252a: "Those thinking that the statesman, monarch, estate manager, and master are the same speak falsely." ὅσοι μὲν οὖν οἴονται πολιτικὸν καὶ βασιλικὸν καὶ οἰκονομικὸν καὶ δεσποτικὸν εἶναι τὸν αὐτὸν οὐ καλῶς λέγουσιν.

⁵²⁵ Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 1161bff: "There is no friendship or justice toward inanimate objects, not even toward a horse or an ox, nor toward a slave as slave. For there is nothing in common [between master and slave]. ... As a slave, there is no friendship for him, but as a man there is; for it seems that there is in every man a certain civilised [instinct] toward everyone capable of partaking in custom and contract; and indeed friendship [is possible] according to how human the slave is." φίλια δ' οὐκ ἔστι πρὸς τὰ ἄψυχα οὐδὲ δίκαιον. ἀλλ' οὐδὲ πρὸς ἵππον ἢ βοῦν, οὐδὲ πρὸς δοῦλον ἢ δοῦλος, οὐδὲν γὰρ κοινόν ἐστιν. ... ἢ μὲν οὖν δοῦλος, οὐκ ἔστι φίλια πρὸς αὐτόν, ἢ δ' ἄνθρωπος· δοκεῖ γὰρ εἶναι τι δίκαιον παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ πρὸς πάντα τὸν δυνάμενον κοινωνῆσαι νόμου καὶ συνθήκης· καὶ φίλια δὴ, καθ' ὅσον ἄνθρωπος.

naturalising the slave's role in the planter household, therefore, American slaving ideology radically diverges from the Greek one.

The final trope significant to the function of caretaker slave stereotypes is that of having authority over their wards and some realm of the household, usually the kitchen. In the White imagination, Mammy loomed authoritatively over her owner's plantation. For example, nearly 30 years after the Civil War, Mississippian Annie Broidrick recollected:

Consequential, important, and next in authority to the owners were the old "Black mammies" ...As they grew old they were exempt from hard work, and ruled white and black with impartial severity. ...She never allowed us to go into the kitchen. That was considered extremely low-taste; and she would say with an emphatic shake of the old, turbaned head, "Nobody but niggers go in thar. Sit in de parlor wid'er book in yo'r hand like little white ladies." ...after a punishment it was "mammy" who always wiped the streaming eyes, and gave comfort with many a pat and word, muttering all the while, "But, honey, why donn yer make yo'r ma so mad, acting like sich po'r white trash?"⁵²⁶

Broidrick's description encapsulates well the sort of authority that Mammy was thought to have: she was tasked with socialising her White wards and policing their conduct so that they would grow into properly mannered, planter 'aristocrats'.⁵²⁷

As Broidrick demonstrates, one of the most important loci for Mammy's socialisation of White children was ensuring that they know that Black women's proper place was in the kitchen, whereas White women belonged in the parlour and world of leisure. This is not necessarily a proslavery position, and this racist conception of proper social stations seeps into Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, when Aunt Chloe recounts how

⁵²⁶ Broidrick 1893, 6

⁵²⁷ Genovese 1974, 356; D. G. White 1985, 48, 53, 56

she once got “kinder saucy” and lectured her mistress on who belonged in the kitchen: “jist look at dem beautiful white hands o' yourn with long fingers, and all a sparkling with rings, like my white lilies when de dew 's on 'em; and look at my great black stumpin hands. Now, don't ye think dat de Lord must have meant me to make de pie-crust, and you to stay in de parlor?”⁵²⁸ So ingrained was this conception of Mammy’s ‘place’ that when paper doll houses became a craze by the mid-19th century, companies would often include premade Mammy cut-outs alongside the pots and pans meant to be glued into the kitchen, and some surviving paper doll houses, even those without premade servant cut-outs, indeed had Mammy permanently stuck in the kitchen.⁵²⁹ Children from a very early age were inculcated with Mammy’s ‘place’ in front of an immaculately clean stove.

A Mammy’s authority supposedly extended beyond kitchen protocol to warding off bad influences or unprepared suitors as well as to instilling in her charges manners commensurate with their social position. For example, with respect to warding off inappropriate playmates and suitors, Susan Eppes remembered that her Mammy “was an out and out aristocrat—she discouraged, most severely, any associates who to her mind did not come strictly up to the mark.”⁵³⁰ On the one hand, those associates could be Black children in general, such as on the White Hill plantation where the planter children remembered that Mammy was “exclusive and had never encouraged our playing with the

⁵²⁸ Stowe 1852, 1.45

⁵²⁹ Gleason 2011, 20-5

⁵³⁰ Eppes 1925, 76. This sort of taunting aristocrat language was a common way for White slaveholders to laugh at their slaves for having social opinions akin to Whites’. Consider the novel, *The Valley of Shenandoah*, when Edward Grayson teases his Granny Mott, behind her back, since “her predilections for rank and official dignity had given her a distaste for the equality than now prevails and to those persons who had newly made their fortune—upstarts as she called them: In short, she is what is now termed a rank aristocrat.” (Tucker [1824] 1970, 1.87)

young negroes.”⁵³¹ On the other hand, such not-up-to-the-mark associates could also be young White suitors. Ex-slave Drucilla Martin recalled that “My mammy was in full charge of the house,” and she was dumfounded by the way her mother would speak to visiting young White men. She’d say, “What you got makes you think got right to call on my fine daughter? What you own? Can you hire her work done? Do you think my daughter is gwin' to marry any' por' white trash?”⁵³² In male-authored plantation novels Mammy rarely has so much authority—it is typically relegated to idealised mistresses or sisters—but nevertheless her approval of a match was typically sought before serious courtship began.⁵³³ Concerning Mammy’s attention to her wards’ manners, Susan Eppes fondly recalled that hers made sure that “her nurselings were most carefully trained along these lines and not the least touch of vulgarity, either in speech or manner, was tolerated; you can almost hear the old time admonitions, ‘You ain’t got no call ter say dat—you aint no pore white trash—nur no nigger nuther—take yer finger out yore mouth.’”⁵³⁴ Mammy’s manners policing bears a remarkable resemblance to how the ancient Greeks described the harring of their *παιδαγωγοί*. As Aristides explains, “Don’t *παιδαγωγοί* say these things? ‘It’s not right to overindulge yourself in food!’ and ‘You’d better walk in

⁵³¹ White Hill Plantation Books, p. 5, 45 Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina (as quoted and cited in D. G. White 1985, 48, n. 73)

⁵³² WPA *Slave Narratives*, vol. 10, 244. It cannot be stressed enough that Drucilla Martin found her tomahawk-wielding mother’s privileged position mindboggling, given how her interviewer noted that she had ample material about slave abuse to share: “She told some gruesome stories of how some of the masters treated their slaves. She said there never was a book printed that really told how some, or in fact the majority of the slaves were beaten and abused. To most masters they were not any more than stock. She said some of the young girls were beaten until they would die. Some of the little colored babies that were born out in the field or on the road were left to starve or be eaten up by the hogs.”

⁵³³ Sc. Tucker [1824] 1970, 1.85-6

⁵³⁴ Eppes 1925, 76

the streets with decency, stand up for your elders, and love your parents!’ and ‘Neither make a fuss, nor play dice.’⁵³⁵

The ancient sources, however, do not undercut the authority that *παιδαγωγοί* had over their wards, and several sources insist that these caretaker slaves were allowed to physically punish their wards for bad conduct, a task always relegated to a White parent on American plantations.⁵³⁶ Annie Broidrick’s Mammy only comforted and scolded her charges after a parent had beaten them, and the same limit is drawn in fiction. In the Mammy-centric novel *Diddie, Dumps and Tot*, when the three White protagonist children run away from Mammy with her three Black children, “picking up a cotton stalk, she gave each of the little darkies a sound whipping,” whereas, “much to Mammy’s disgust,” the White children’s mother merely lectures and kisses them. Mammy’s threats of punishment cannot be backed up with action.⁵³⁷ In fact, this Mammy’s function in the novel is not actually to socialise the White children through obsession with social propriety, but to do so by proving again and again that they are her racial superiors who need not respect her at all.⁵³⁸ Partway into the novel, the Mammy, in true caretaker form, scolds Dumps, “Jes keep on, an’ yer’ll see wat’ll happen ter yer; yer’ll wake up some er deze mornins, an’ yer won’t have no hyar on yer head. I knowed er little gal onct wat sassed her mudder, an’ de Lord he sent er angel in de night, he did, an’ struck her plum’ bald-headed.” Dumps masterfully manipulates the situation. First she retorts with racial supremacy, “You ain’t none o’ my mother. You’re mos’ black ez my shoes; an’ de Lord

⁵³⁵ Aristides *In Defence of Oratory* 380: οὐχί... ταῦτα λέγουσιν... οἱ παιδαγωγοί; ὑπερεμπίπλασθαί σε οὐ χρὴ καὶ βαδίζειν ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς [ὅτι χρὴ] κοσμίως καὶ τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις ὑπανίστασθαί καὶ τοὺς γονέας φιλεῖν καὶ μὴ θορυβεῖν μηδὲ κυβεύειν.

⁵³⁶ Plutarch *Life of Marcus Cato* 20.4; Quintilian 1.3.14-7

⁵³⁷ Pynelle [1882] 1980, 65-6

⁵³⁸ Connolly 2013, 103-11

ain't er goin' ter pull all my hair off jes 'boutn you." Then she sobs her way down the stairs to her father and complains, "Mammy's ben er sa-a-as-sin me," which gets her straight out of trouble.⁵³⁹ When Mammy tries to tell the children a story about "er little Fraid, named Cheery," Diddie interrupts her "contemptuously" and declares "there's no such thing." When one of Mammy's children tries to defend the veracity of the story, Mammy turns on the Black child: "Look er hyear, yer kinky-head nigger, whar's yer manners?" Evidently the "ruptin uv eld'ly pussons" is only allowable in the case of White children.⁵⁴⁰

In a sense, although it is not trying to do so, *Diddie, Dumps and Tot* captures quite accurately how White children were actually socialised on plantations. From a young age they were made to understand their social and racial superiority.⁵⁴¹ This is true even with respect to their caretakers. So Solomon Northup recorded about Epps' son: "It is pitiable, sometimes, to see him chastising, for instance, Uncle Abram. He will call the old man to account, and if in his childish judgement it is necessary, sentence him to a certain number of lashes, which he proceeds to inflict with much gravity and deliberation." "With such training," mused Northup, "whatever may be his natural disposition, it cannot well be otherwise than that, on arriving at maturity, the sufferings and miseries of the slave will

⁵³⁹ Pynelle [1882] 1980, 93-4. Cf. p. 51

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid. 45

⁵⁴¹ *Diddie, Dumps and Tot* has its protagonist children already accustomed to having a personal servant at their beck and call: "There were Riar, Chris, and Dilsey, three little negroes, who belonged to the little girls and played with them, and were in training to be their maids by and by." (Pynelle [1882] 1980, 14) Cf. Joseph Ingraham's *Sunny South*, where the novels' Northern-born mistress describes how her son Harry "knocked over a little wooley-crowned black baby," the grandson of his caretaker slave Aunt Chloe, who remarks at this situation: "Mass Harry make little nigga know hi' place!" The mistress narrates: "I could not help laughing at the old woman's remark; at the same time could not by feel its truth. The white infant on a plantation very early understands, as if by instinct, its superiority; while the African child tacitly recognizes it." (Ingraham 1860, 416-7)

be looked upon with entire indifference.”⁵⁴² Slaveholders concurred, though they were generally less willing to document actual examples of planters’ children beating slaves.⁵⁴³ This sort of description of planter childhoods explains well the reason that so many Southern slaveholders could stomach the cruelty carried out on their estates. Absolute power in childhood corrupts the ability to empathise with subordinates.⁵⁴⁴ They also explain why the Mammy stereotype rose to such importance after the 1830s. People looking to obscure the violence which underscored the majority of master-slave relationships and those trying to delude themselves into believing the slave system was a ‘positive good’ could cling to a loving, all-capable caretaker slave image that rewrote slaveholders’ exploitation of slaves into affection for them. In the post-Civil War period Mammy took on an even greater importance for White supremacist ideologues in that she continued to serve as ‘proof’ that slavery had been mild and that slaves like Mammy were happy in that life, justifying the militaristic terrorism aimed at restoring as far as

⁵⁴² Northrup [1853] 1970, 260-1. “Mounted on his pony, he often rides into the field with his whip, playing the overseer, greatly to his father’s delight. Without discrimination, at such times, he applies the rawhide, urging the slaves forward with shouts, and occasional expressions of profanity, while the old man laughs, and commends him as a thorough-going boy.”

⁵⁴³ Thomas Jefferson: The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions, the most unremitting despotism... Our children see this, and learn to imitate it; for man is an imitative animal... The parent storms, the child looks on, catches the lineaments of wrath, puts on the same airs in the circle of smaller slaves, gives loose to his worst of passions, and thus nursed, educated, and daily exercised in tyrants, cannot but be stamped by it with odious peculiarities. The man must be a prodigy who can retain his manners and morals undepraved by such circumstances.” (Jefferson 1788, 172-3) Cf. Woolman 1754, 8.

⁵⁴⁴ As Harriet Jacobs explains: “The slaveholder’s sons are, of course, vitiated, even while boys, by the unclean influences every where around them.” What could better explain the conduct of one the many of Jacob’s cruel neighbouring slaveholders? The “master shot a woman through the head, who had run away and been brought back to him. No one called him to account for it. If a slave resisted being whipped, the bloodhounds were unpacked, and set upon him, to tear his flesh from his bones. The master who did these things was highly educated, and styled a perfect Gentleman. He also boasted the name and standing of a Christian, though Satan never had a truer follower.” (Jacobs 1861, 63-5)

possible the old racial order, and also vindicating the relegation of the majority of Black women to service and housekeeping jobs.⁵⁴⁵

Comparatively, the Mammy stereotype appears to be more ideological and more fabricated than the Greeks' παιδαγωγός stereotype. While both were marshalled to demonstrate slaveholder's benevolence in caring for elderly and unproductive slaves, and while both employed familial language to obfuscate the exploitation of the master-slave relationship, the Greeks did not warp their caretaker slaves' affection into something like religious devotion, nor did they insist that slaves were naturally disposed to loving members of a supposedly superior race more than members of their own family. It is also questionable that the authority of the παιδαγωγός over his or her wards was primarily an ideological construct meant to obscure an actually violent dynamic between the slaveholder child and his caretaker. While self-control, even with respect to mastery over slaves, was an important facet of the Greek elite's self-presentation and the παιδαγωγός stereotype could have been used to bolster that self-presentation, the wanton abuse of subordinates was also a marker of tyrannical aspirations, a reputation for which could be fatal to Greek political careers, especially at Athens. I believe that the Greek social and legal prohibitions against abuse and *hubris* more effectively dissuaded slaveholders from grossly abusive master-slave relations, whereas the American legal and social system was happy to excuse Whites' rape of Black women through the Jezebel stereotype, to justify Whites' lynching and murder of Black men through the rapist Buck stereotype, and to turn a blind eye to the abuse and 'turning out to die' of elderly Black individuals because of the Mammy stereotype.

⁵⁴⁵ Clayton and Drake 1946, 258-9

ii. Sambo: Complacency, Dependence, and Turning Down Freedom

In the late 1950s Stanley Elkins wrote the first in-depth and historical study of the antebellum plantation slave stereotype construct, Sambo, and of how the “closed system” of American plantation slavery shaped the development of this construct and even, in Elkins’ opinion, of the actual personalities of slaves by providing so few ‘roles’ to play in the slave-plantation culture, all of which required total deference to a master’s desires.⁵⁴⁶ While Elkins’ personality theory has been displaced by the idea that slaves put on a Sambo ‘mask’ in order to more easily cope with plantation life, Elkins’ understanding of the essential quality of the Sambo ‘type’ is still valuable: “his relationship with his master was one of utter dependence and childlike attachment.”⁵⁴⁷ This is the quality projected by the slave Hector in the novel *Life at the South*, who fears freedom because all that keeps him from a life of petty thievery and alcoholism is his master’s imperatives. Such stereotypical dependence is not always expressed specifically through the master-slave relationship; just as often it is articulated through images of slaves’ complacency with respect to the plantation setting. As slaves’ prosperity depended on benevolent Southern masters, so their happiness depended on plantation life, which is almost always idealised in both fictional and documentary proslavery accounts of the South as a more comfortable and nourishing life than existed for labourers in the North. In this way Northern and Southern entertainment—stage dramas and comedies, plantation novels, and travelogues—insisted that where Black folk belonged, i.e. where they would best prosper and be most contented, was on plantations and under the control of White patriarchs. For the Northern White labourers in the 19th and 20th centuries this insistence

⁵⁴⁶ Elkins 1976, 81-139

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid. 82. For criticism of Elkins and theories of the ‘Sambo mask’, see: Blassingame 1979, 223ff; Patterson 1982, 207-8; Bradley 1990, 148; Callahan and Horsley 1998, 136.

served both to stoke and calm anxieties concerning competing for work with the free Black labour force. For Southern Whites it bolstered their conviction that Black folk were naturally suited to their place in the ‘peculiar institution’ and that it was in both races’ best interests, therefore, to establish after the Civil War a social order as close in character to racial slavery as possible.⁵⁴⁸

Hence the complacent slave stereotype met the needs of the dominant ideological discourses in both the North and South, and this is why the disgruntled slave type figures so rarely in 19th and early 20th century entertainment. While its mediums left enough room for some disgruntled slave portrayals—most Whites, after all, could readily identify with economic and political exploitation at the hands of American elites⁵⁴⁹—there was never enough room left for the development of a disgruntled slave stereotype, such as the sort that Xanthias of Aristophanes’ *Frogs* embodies, who vociferously complains about his work, attempts to usurp his master’s authority, curses his master behind the scenes, and spreads malicious gossip about him whenever possible. Virtually every American slave character that so much as approaches Xanthias’ mindset is marked off as an exception to the supposed norm of slave complacency, and often this slave is quickly shown to have made a (fatal) error by becoming frustrated with slave life. For example,

⁵⁴⁸ Antebellum stage drama often asserted that White Americans were ill-suited to slavery because they had an in-born love of freedom. Consider S. Rowson’s 1794 *Slaves in Algiers*, where captive White Americans band together to free themselves from the bonds of slavery. A child captive named Augustus insists that if he were man, he’d attempt escape regardless of the consequences, and when his mother Rebecca asks him why, he responds, “An’t I an American, and I am sure you have often told me, in a right cause, the Americans did not fear any thing.” (Rowson 2005, 47) The English woman Fetnah, raised in Algiers, claimed earlier that Rebecca had taught her the “love of liberty.” (Ibid. 21) Hence Rowson sets up Whites as incompatible with servitude because of a natural predisposition to fight against oppression, and the tacit corollary is that Blacks in America, who were generally considered docile and loyal toward Whites *by nature*, were incompatible with freedom and American citizenship.

⁵⁴⁹ Consider the black-face minstrel song “De Blue Tail Fly / Jimmy Crack Corn” which portrays a plantation slave as allowing his master’s horse to be bitten by this fly, toss off the master, and trample him, after which the slave celebrates—“dey say all tings am for the best”—by enjoying his gimcrack (“worthless”) corn whiskey (corn liquor being the most common and disgusting liquor easily obtained by slaves) without a care for its quality—his master’s death is *that* sweet. (Lott 1993, 200)

in John Kennedy's *Swallow Barn* the reader is told the story of one of the plantation's slaves named Abe, "an exception to the general respectability" of the slaves born on the estate, whose "courage" and "shrewdness of intellect" causes great frustration in him concerning servitude and prompts his escape. After his master retrieves him from a maroon colony, Abe is allowed to be hired out as a sailor, but, once he excels to the point of hiring his own time and commanding his own vessel, he foolhardily sails into a raging storm against the advice of experienced White sea captains. He wrecks his ship and drowns, an event which drives his "Aunt Lucy" insane. In Kennedy's presentation of the South, a slave divorced from the plantation and his master's direct control is doomed.⁵⁵⁰ It is far more common, however, for no disgruntled slave characters to figure at all in proslavery entertainment. The complacent Sambo 'type' crowds them out.

On stage and in song the vast majority of slave characters expressed contentment with plantation life and with their treatment by their masters, or a longing to return back to them. Such songs would be sung on their own in minstrel shows, and also in chorus as an introduction to black-face dramatic performances like the stage productions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.⁵⁵¹ It should be noted that some of the impetus for these songs stemmed from cities' sentimental and nostalgic audience members who identified their own longing for an agricultural way of life, which was being eroded by American industrialisation, with the black-face slaves' longing.⁵⁵² More of the impetus stemmed

⁵⁵⁰ J. Kennedy [1853] 1962, 466-90. Cf. female-authored anti-Uncle Tom novels, in which, as Joy Jordan-Lake explains, unlike how Harriet Beecher Stowe's Eliza finds salvation and safety for her family by escaping slavery, runaway slaves find only misery in Northern cities and the destruction of stable family life. In such novels, only remaining on or returning to plantations secures for slaves happiness, prosperity, and security for the nuclear family. (Jordan-Lake 2005, 15, 82-4)

⁵⁵¹ The play's opening at New York's Star Theatre was advertised as having "all the accessories of bloodhounds, plantation songs, cake-walks, and a most gorgeous transformation scene." (Frick 2012, 149)

⁵⁵² Lott 1993, 191

from Whites' desire to imagine that Black folk belonged on plantations, the only places where Black families could remain intact and happy in racist thought. Hence we hear songs where the dissolution of a plantation estate is mourned by black-face slaves as the loss of an idyllic existence and of closeness to their family. In Stephen Foster's "Old Kentucky Home," for example, the first stanza lays out what plantation life was like before "hard times comes a knocking:" "The sun shines bright in the old Kentucky home. 'tis summer, the darkies are gay. The corn top's ripe and the meadows in the bloom, while the birds make music all day. The young folks roll on the little cabin floor, all merry, all happy and bright." Once the plantation's breakup has occurred, the song becomes a lament for that once 'happy and bright' life. "They sing no more by the glimmer of the moon, on the bench by the old cabin door," because now "the darkies have to part," which means "the head must bow and the back will have to bend, wherever the darkey may go."⁵⁵³ In songs such as this, no matter what opportunities lay open to these characters, the only place and time in which they feel satisfied is on the plantation, during enslavement. There is a faint echo of this stereotype in Greek Comedy, when the Daos in Menander's *Farmer* returns from his master's fields, saying, "I think that nobody farms a more holy field,"⁵⁵⁴ but this complacent sentiment does not seem to have become stereotypical of Menander's slave characters. The Daos in his *Perinthian Girl*, after all, attempts escape, and the nameless Thracian slave in the *Shield* ridicules that play's Daos for not absconding with his presumed dead master's war booty.

Another aspect of black-face characters is that they mourn bitterly for their deceased masters, and, again, this does not seem to have become an ancient trope. The Daos from

⁵⁵³ Foster 1909, 139-40. Cf. "Old Folks at Home" (Ibid. 187)

⁵⁵⁴ Mendander *Farmer* 35-6: ἀγρὸν εὐσεβέστερον ψεωργεῖν οὐδένα / οἶμαι.

The Shield is the only comparable Greek example. American entertainment, by contrast, repeatedly made recourse to this trope, aiming to advertise planters' benevolent treatment of slaves and the slaves' rightful, happiest place as under masters' control. Several black-face minstrel ballads were solely about mourning good masters. In Foster's "Massa's in de Cold Ground," for instance, the third stanza begins: "Massa made de darkeys love him, cayse he was so kind. Now dey sadly weep above him, mourning cayse he leave dem behind."⁵⁵⁵ This popular master-mourning sub-genre of black-face minstrelsy continually reinforced in the White imagination, even well after Emancipation, that Black folk were happiest when they were in the possession of Whites.

This message was also a focus of many nominally non-fiction accounts of Southern life. In a certain G.S.S.'s travelogue, "Sketches of the South Santee," for instance, the plantation belonging to a Miss Lynch was lauded for the care-free life that this mistress had bestowed on her slaves. Her plantation was so idyllic that when the slaves were thirsty, "they resorted to the nearest spring; and their food, though of the simplest kind, afforded a healthy aliment," while, at night, their "abstemious habits, combined with the labours of the day, and their freedom from care for the wants of the morrow, rendered their slumbers sound and refreshing." G.S.S. imagined that, in such a setting and under such a mistress, "the slaves themselves wanted only the name of freemen to be as free, and probably as happy, as beings constituted as they were are susceptible of."⁵⁵⁶

⁵⁵⁵ Foster 1909, 138. Cf. George Christy and Wood's Minstrels' "Massa's Death:" "Many years I worked hard for him; happy once I used to be. Tho' he sometimes would be angry, he was always kind to me. How I loved when work was done, at the close of summer day; to sit beside the cabin door, and for old massa sing and play. ...And when grim old death shall come to call my soul from earth away; I wish when carried to the grave that I may sleep where massa lay." (Christy and White 1854, 1.57-58) Cf. the troupe's "Massa now is Sleeping:" "now this darkey's heart is sad, I cannot smile no more—poor old massa's sleeping on the Mississippi shore." (Ibid. 1.52)

⁵⁵⁶ G.S.S., "Sketches of the South Santee," *American Monthly Magazine* 8 (October, November 1836): 313-19. 431-42 (as excerpted in Schwaab and Bull 1973, 1.8-10). Oddly, G.S.S. claims that these slaves are

Travelogues like this one often set their idealised descriptions of plantation life against a demonised description of Northern urban life, insisting that the Black slaves enjoy a substantially better standard of living than do the poor of New York.⁵⁵⁷ For example, a certain G.M. of Virginia penned an account of his visit to South Carolina, in which his description of plantation and urban slavery is similarly idyllic. He asserts that “the negro, if not at home, is yet so much better fed, clothed, and conditioned than in New-York, that he seems to be well at ease, and comfortable, if not rising in the world,” and therefore “the evils of slavery are softened by humane treatment.”⁵⁵⁸ When labour organisers took to the pages of newspapers to air their grievances and rally support, they too played into this proslavery trope, and politicians were equally eager to trumpet this reasoning as they built up sectional animus.⁵⁵⁹ John Henry Hammond in 1858 did so before the United States Senate: “The difference between us is, that our slaves are hired for life and well compensated; there is no starvation, no begging... Yours are hired by the day, not cared for, and scantily compensated... You meet more beggars in one day, in any single street of the city of New York, than you would meet in a lifetime in the whole South.”⁵⁶⁰

deliriously happy, but he also explains that the process of rice winnowing “annually carried off from five to ten per cent. of their number by death, and rendered others who survived the victims of permanent rheumatic affections.” (Ibid. 1.15-6)

⁵⁵⁷ I have already quoted at length Olmsted’s frustration with these claims, see: p. 161, n. 471. That footnote also references modern anthropometric studies which show that Northern White labourers were taller and better nourished than Southern Black labourers. On the ideological insistence that Black slaves fared better than Northern Whites, see also: Roediger 1991, 74-7.

⁵⁵⁸ G.M., “South-Carolina,” *New England Magazine* 1 (September, October 1831): 246-50, 337-41 (as excerpted in Schwaab and Bull 1973, 1.232). Cf. Nathan Bass on the better treatment of slaves than of Northern labourers: “Negroes thus treated and managed are prolific, cheerful, industrious and happy. ...[Northerners] would find them far in advance of the downtrodden and oppressed free negroes of the North; and that they are the best fed, best clothed, most cheerful and happy labouring population on the globe, and that their sickly and fawning sycophancy had better be turned homeward to their own oppressed peasantry.” (Bass 1852, 200)

⁵⁵⁹ *Working Man’s Advocate* July 6th, 1844 (as quoted in Roediger 1991, 77)

⁵⁶⁰ Hammond 1858, 14: “Our slaves are black, of another and inferior race. The *status* in which we have placed [Blacks] is an elevation. They are elevated from the condition in which God first created them, by

This is the same propagandising tactic that plantation novels so often employed, especially when they mimic travelogues by having the a slaveholder give a plantation tour to a typically Northern visitor. In Tucker's *Valley of Shenandoah*, for instance, the slaveholder Edward Grayson explains to the Northern visitor Gildon that, due to his unparalleled racial understanding of the slaves' needs, "they are perhaps better supplied with the necessities of life than the labouring class of any country out of America. They have their pleasures and enjoyments according to their station and capacity, and probably enjoy as much happiness, with as few drawbacks, as any other of our population."⁵⁶¹ In John Page's *Uncle Robin in his Cabin in Virginia and Tom without One in Boston*, a slaveholder visits some Irish labourers' shanties, the conditions of which are decrepit. A proud Jerry declares that "there's a world of difference between free people and slaves," to which the slaveholder responds: "If slaves have more learning than free people, more religion than free people, and have better houses to live in than free people, I think the difference is in favour of slaves."⁵⁶² In fiction and non-fiction these ham-fisted

being made our slaves. None of that race on the whole face of the globe can be compared with the slaves of the South. They are happy, content, unambitious, and utterly incapable, from intellectual weakness, ever to give us any trouble by their aspirations. Yours are white, of your own race; you are brothers of one blood. They are your equals in natural endowment of intellect, and they feel galled by their degradation."

⁵⁶¹ Tucker [1824] 1970, 1.63, 1.67. Caruthers' *The Kentuckian in New-York* presents a similar sentiment, although not so directly and with far more criticism against slavery. Caruthers constructs South Carolina's slavery as far more severe than Virginia's, where slavery "has something soothing about it to the heart of the philanthropist," but descriptions of plantation management in both locations emphasise that the slaves "lived substantially well." New York's poor, however, emphatically did not: "Little blind and lame boys sat about the iron railing at St. Paul's church, grinding hand-organs, and making music little better than so many grinding stones—all for a miserable pittance which they collect in the shape of pennies, perhaps to the amount of a dozen a day. ...At every corner some old huckster sang out 'Hot corn! Hot corn!' though the regular season of 'roasting-ears' has long since passed by." (Caruthers 1834, 1.115-9, 1.201-2)

⁵⁶² Page 1853, 33-4. Jerry's shanty is just about as run down as the slave quarters and infirmary described by Frances Kemble (see: p. 174, n. 507): "It was a sty indeed; there lay the mother in one corner on a dirt floor, with nothing between her and the floor but an old worn out blanket, and half covered with something that looked like a black stained saddle-cloth. She was shaking with an ague. There were, in another corner, six children, half naked, and shivering as if they too had agues. The filth and stench was insupportable, and Mrs. Boswell had to make her escape to the fresh air as soon as possible." (Page 1853, 30-1) Notably, the Tom slave in this novel trades his easy plantation life for pauperism in Boston that results in his death. Like in Kennedy's *Swallow Barn*, slaves divorced from a master are doomed.

comparisons between poor White labourers and Black slaves hammered home not just that the ‘peculiar institution’ was benevolent and beneficial for Black folk, but also that it was so to such a degree that abolitionism was a misplaced sentiment. The plight of the poor Whites was the *real* problem.⁵⁶³ Black folk were well provided for under slavery, asserted proslavery ideologues and many White labour advocates, and, over and above this, they were happy.

The last complacency trope that needs to be discussed is arguably one of slaveholders’ favourite methods to ‘prove’ that their slaves were content with their treatment as subordinates to Southern Whites: having real or fictional slaves turn down offers of manumission. The ideological benefits of this strategy is clear: claims about slaves’ satisfaction are more believable when coming from a slave’s mouth, though some astute contemporary observers would have understood that masters could and did coach their slaves to spout proslavery propaganda. So, when Frederick Olmsted visited the South Carolinian rice plantation belonging to a certain planter dubbed Mr. X, the refusal-of-freedom trope that one of his slave women performs before Olmsted should be understood as part of the “show plantation” propaganda that a passer-by had explained to

⁵⁶³ The common 19th century notion that the poor Whites’ conditions required more attention than slaves’ hangs somewhere between abolitionism and proslavery ideals. On the one hand, most Americans were convinced that Black folk had higher standards of living and guaranteed elderly care, and so abolitionism was seen to distract attention from White’s more precarious situation. On the other hand, both Northern and Southern authors were adamant that proximity to slavery degraded the work ethic of free people, and so the South’s poor Whites would never be able to rise to middle class status because slavery had robbed them of the will to do labour. They only wanted slaves to do it. In Tucker’s *Valley of Shenandoah*, slavery is castigated as an evil only on such terms: “It is the effect which slavery has on the whites, that the chief mischief is produced. It consigns half of the population to idleness, or tends to consign them, both by making their labour less necessary, and by making it degrading.” (Tucker [1824] 1970, 69) Cf. Caruthers 1834, 76-81. By constructing slavery as a threat to White labourers, some slaveholders came dangerously close to advocating for abolition, since antislavery advocates also parroted this degraded White labour trope. Sc. (Olmsted [1861] 1966, 525-8).

Olmsted only slightly earlier.⁵⁶⁴ Mr. X even heightened her performance's propaganda value by selecting for the task an African born slave as opposed to a second or third generation house-born one whose loyalty could be attributed to long family ties to the planter's family.⁵⁶⁵ The slave woman's performance began when Mr. X "jokingly proposed to send her back to Africa. She expressed her preference to remain where she was, very emphatically. 'Why?' She did not answer readily, but being pressed, threw up her palsied hands, and said furiously, 'I lubs 'ou mas'r, oh, I lubs 'ou. I don't want go 'way from 'ou.'"⁵⁶⁶ It is a shame that Olmsted chose not to share the name of Mr. X. I would love to know which planter staged the very opposite of Euripides' Hecuba, whose rejection of manumission demonstrated the dehumanisation and insanity caused by her enslavement.

Olmsted had interviewed other slaves who emphatically yearned for freedom,⁵⁶⁷ so he likely felt that the performance of Mr. X's slave woman smacked of fiction, as this trope was repeatedly written into popular antebellum plantation novels and occasionally it was acted out on the minstrel stage. In W.L.G. Smith's novel *Life at the South* the slave

⁵⁶⁴ "I asked a direction of a man on horseback, who overtook and was passing me... He inquired if I was a stranger; and, when he heard that I was from the North, and now first visiting the South, he remarked that there was 'no better place for me to go to than that for which I was bound. Mr. X. was a very fine man—rich, got a splendid plantation, lived well, had plenty of company always, and there were a number of other show plantations near his.' ...I asked what he called 'show plantations.' 'Plantations belonging to rich people,' he said, 'where they had everything fixed up nice. There were several places that had that name; their owners always went out and lived on them part of the year, and then they kept a kind of open house, and were always ready to receive company.'" (Olmsted [1856] 1968, 412)

⁵⁶⁵ "She was a native African, having been brought when a girl from the Guinea coast." (Olmsted [1856] 1968, 433-4)

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid. 434

⁵⁶⁷ In New Orleans, Olmsted asked a slave who had described his master as amply providing him with food and clothing, "Wouldn't you rather live on such a plantation than to be free, William?" "Oh! No, sir, I'd rather be free! Oh, yes, sir, I'd like it better to be free; I would dat, master. ...I'd rather work for myself. Yes. I'd like that better." Olmsted presses William as to whether his freedom-oriented mindset was typical of the majority of slaves: "Oh! Yes, sir; dey talk so; dat's wat dey tink." Olmsted asks, "Then they talk about being free a good deal, do they?" William replies, "Yes, sir. Dey—dat is, dey say dey wish it was so; dat's all dey talk, master—dat's all, sir." (Olmsted [1861] 1966, 264-5)

Hector rejects his manumission dramatically: “I dam to hell, massa, if I guine to be free!’ roared the adhesive black, in a tone of unrestrainable determination. ... ‘De ting ain’t right!’”⁵⁶⁸ In William Gilmore Simm’s *Woodcraft* the slave Tom is just as vigorous in rejecting freedom: “I no guine to be free no way you kin fix it; so, maussa, don’t you bodder me wid dis nonsense t’ing ’bout free paper any more. I’s well off wha’ I is I tell you; and I much rudder [rather] b’long to good maussa, wha’ I lub, dan be my own maussa and quarrel wid mese’f ebbry day. Da’s it!”⁵⁶⁹ In Caroline Hentz’s *The Planter’s Northern Bride* the slave Crissy is just as commanding when her mistress decides to stipulate Crissy’s manumission in her will. She also does not understand how wills work. “Don’t want to be free, Miss Iilda; heap rather live with you and Mars. Richard. ... Lord bless you, missus! Don’t say nothing more ’bout that.”⁵⁷⁰ Even comedic stage slave characters were made to lament their own freedom. A very popular song from one of the most famous blackface minstrel song writers, “Ring, Ring de Banjo!” by Stephen Foster, had a slave character sing, “Once I was so lucky, / My massa set me free, / I went to old Kentucky / to see what I could see; / I could not go no farder, / I turn to massa’s door, / I lub him all the harder, / I’ll go away no more.”⁵⁷¹ Over and over again antebellum fiction not only proclaimed that Black slaves were happy with their treatment and living conditions on plantations, but it also forced these sentiments into the mouths of slave

⁵⁶⁸ W. Smith 1852, 47

⁵⁶⁹ Simms 1854, 509; the [rather] correction is his.

⁵⁷⁰ Hentz 1854, 250. Crissy was earlier adamant that she accompany her mistress when she moved back to the North, leaving her own husband and children behind. (p. 222) Also, remember the nameless ex-slave from the novel’s preface who declares in “her own words:” ““I wouldn’t have left my master and mistress for all the freedom in the world. I’d left my own father and mother first.” (p. vii-viii) Cf. Granny Mott in Tucker’s *The Valley of Shenandoah*, who is offered her freedom (in any manner she chose to have it) when the Grayson estate is auctioned and the planter women intend to move to a different county, but rejects the offer in favour of staying with her owners. “Oh! No, mistress... I must go with you. ...I must live and die with my old master’s child.” (Tucker [1824] 1970, 199)

⁵⁷¹ Foster 1909, 202

characters so as to heighten the currency of the stereotype. During the antebellum period, this manner of propaganda defended the generosity and benevolence of slaveholders and the ‘peculiar institution’ generally, and after the Civil War, since these novels and minstrel songs retained their popularity well into the 20th century, such depictions were used to support Whites’ claims that Black people were happier in slavery than in freedom and so the military effort to overthrow Reconstruction was aimed at restoring the social order back to how Black folk supposedly wanted it.

Conclusion

Each of the anti-Black, racial stereotypes described in this chapter has been demonstrated to have originated as justificatory propaganda for White elites’ imposition of a “racialised social system” in which Black folk were excluded from most economic, social, and political privileges. The degradation caused by this exclusion reinforced these stereotypes and the social system as natural for subsequent generations of Whites, many of whom had “forgotten” the elites’ self-serving motivations for the system’s institutionalised anti-Black discrimination. The natural appearance of these stereotypes and social system ensured that the ‘production of difference’ was the dominant cultural discourse, and that even the most sympathetic Whites would be hard-pressed to pierce through the propaganda, fully empathise with the oppressed Black folk, and unite with them against elite control. Elites excluded Black men and women from educational opportunities under the pretext that they were racially incapable of intellectualism, and the general White population increasingly accepted and defended this exclusion because they benefitted from it and the overwhelming majority of Black individuals with whom they came into contact had been so undereducated as to breathe life into elites’ racial

stereotypes. This process occurred for all of the discussed stereotypes, each shifting in content or intensity as the American social system was altered. The most obvious and illustrative shift occurred during Reconstruction, at the end of which White Southern elites orchestrated a counter-revolution and the reestablishment of a legally sanctioned racialised social system, justified through the intensification of stereotypes concerning Blacks' unfitness for citizenship, laziness, criminality, and sexual threat. What most distinguishes the American social system from the Greeks' is that its discourse concerning slaves and freedmen continually rejected their common humanity, stereotyped them as diametrically opposed to the values of citizenship, and nearly always imputed this difference to fabricated, unbridgeable, inborn and racial characteristics of the oppressed population.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the literary stereotypes which ancient Athenians constructed about their slaves and citizens more often stressed a common humanity and ‘similarity’ rather than ‘difference’, and that this phenomenon contrasts with antebellum White Americans’ opposing slave and citizen stereotypes, because the societies’ social systems contained fundamental differences. Concerning slaves and freedmen, the Athenian social system was more inclusive than the American system, in that the Athenians did not so highly restrict slaves and freedmen’s economic, educational, and social opportunities.

In Athens educated slaves were highly visible in positions of administrative authority, slaves were frequently used as ‘fellow workers’ alongside citizens in nearly all lines of work, and many citizens had direct experience of enslavement through lost battles and piracy, which led to a broad acknowledgement in Greek literature that slavery was the result of misfortune to which anyone was liable. This prompted Athenians to recognise their slaves’ common humanity and to construct images of slaves in their entertainment that were often strikingly similar to their stereotypical images of the citizens themselves. In antebellum and Jim Crow America virtually the opposite is true. The high visibility of economically, intellectually, and socially degraded slaves and freedmen, who were overwhelmingly relegated to highly exploitative menial labour, and whose children were marked out for perpetual slavery and oppression of the sort to which no White was subjected, prompted the production and acceptance of justificatory propaganda which constructed stereotypical images of Black slaves that were dehumanising and diametrically opposed to the White American conception of citizenship.

Furthermore, this study demonstrates that White Americans' propagandistic construction of anti-Black stereotypes along racist and essentialist lines was a part of elites' imposition of a "racialised social system," which broadened White Americans' ideological conception of supremacy beyond slaves. By the 19th century especially White supremacist ideology asserted that there were essentialized, racial differences between all White and Black folk, regardless of social status. Hence when the 'peculiar institution' was abolished, the "racialised social system," along with its attending ideology and stereotypes, survived and even thrived. New means of racial oppression, such as the 19th and 20th century convict-leasing system and contemporary mass incarceration, were instituted, and by their presence White Americans continued to be encouraged to view themselves as all Black folk's superiors, and to treat and manage them that way.

The ideology and stereotypes underpinning Athenian slavery, on the other hand, were more ambivalent about citizens' supremacy. Instead of essentialising citizen superiority, Greek authors regularly asserted that class and social status were based on fortune and the favour of the gods, and were therefore fluid. The rich and powerful were just as liable to fortune as the lowly. This ideological perspective extended to slaves, and so, even though slaveholders were permitted the horrific treatment of slaves, the Athenians were not encouraged to view the enslaved as anything but unfortunate individuals. Rather, as this study has demonstrated, their literature impressed upon them that slaves had a common claim to humanity, and that they ought to be managed accordingly. Based on this crucial difference between the ancients' insistence and the moderns' rejection of slaves' common humanity, and in view of modern critical race theory's articulation of racism as structural and systemic, I suggest that it is anachronistic to attribute racism to Classical Athens.

Summary

The first chapter of this study examines the stereotypical images of slaves in ancient Greek comedy through the poets Aristophanes, Menander, and Herodas. In their own way, each of these authors produce more similarity than difference between citizen and slave characters. One of the chief findings of this chapter is that the ancient comic poets recognise that slaves' resistance to work was the sort of conduct which could be expected of any person, free or enslaved, who is tasked with boring and unpleasant labour, especially when there is no evident, direct personal benefit. Experience working and rowing alongside slaves seems to have prepared Athenians to empathise with the slaves' 'laziness'. These poets also depict slaves and citizens as possessing similar ranges of intelligence, courage, and reliability. The Syros and Daos of Menander's *Arbitration*, for example, are both shown to have a handle on legal rhetoric. Aristophanes portrays slaves and citizens as equally thievish, and in none of the ancient comedic material is there a hint of "moral panic" about slaves' sexual threat. Aristophanes and Menander's presentation of slave loyalty, however, is demonstrably proslavery while still stressing slaves' common humanity. Masters' indulgence of their slaves' resistance and their doling out of high-familial care to slaves 'earns' loyalty, and enslaved characters such as Daos in Menander's *Shield* speak of their loyalty as contingent on such treatment. Nonetheless, this presents slaveholders as benevolent, and constructs slavery as less oppressive as it surely was in reality.

The second chapter of this study surveys the images of slaves in ancient Greek tragedy through the poets Aeschylus, Sophocles, and, to a greater extent, Euripides. These poets actively challenge citizen-slave and Greek-barbarian dichotomist generalisations with the aim of instructing Athenians not to outright dismiss points of view on the basis of status

and hence to develop critical reasoning skills beneficial to participation in juries and assemblies. Tragedy repeatedly includes slaves like Deianeira's nurse in Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*, who offer their masters or the audience opinions which the plays affirm as correct. Concerning slaves' 'fitness for citizenship', the tragedians, like the comic poets, present slaves as possessing the same range of intellectualism, morality, and independence of thought. This is particularly evident in portrayal of the 'free-minded' slave in Euripides' *Helen*, who, just like the tragedian's heroic Achilles, disobeys orders when they do not fit with the slave's own ethical standards. Also like the comic poets, the tragedians play into a proslavery ideology that insists slaveholders 'earned' their slaves' loyalty through familial attentiveness. Over and above this, the tragedians imply that there is a 'just' mode of slavery by their presentation of the catastrophic errors committed by their tragic slavers. The 'just' mode would be based on an understanding of slaves' common humanity and on handling slaves in accordance with it. This is made clear by how the tragedians portray, with realism shockingly similar to that found in antebellum slave narratives, the strained relationship between enslaved women and the mistresses who indulge assumptions about the slaves' characters instead of building a relationship with them. The theme is most acute in Euripides' *Andromache*, in which Peleus chastises Hermione and Menelaus for their failure to respect and empathise with the captive Andromache.

The third chapter of this study examined anti-Black stereotypes in a variety of popular American entertainment mediums from the antebellum and Jim Crow periods, highlighting the stereotypes' changes in content and intensity as changes occurred in the country's "racialised social system." In every medium Black slaves and freedmen were

castigated and dehumanised, portrayed as inferior and contrary to White American citizens. Black-face minstrel shows portrayed Black folk as impossibly stupid, and literary mediums insisted that Black folk, by nature and race, had not the intellectual capacity to construct a rational argument or participate in the legal system. Jehu in Simms' *The Golden Christmas* is paradigmatic. While many antebellum Americans were, like the Greek comedic poets, able to recognise 'laziness' as resistance and a lack of incentive to labour, the American attitude remains distinctive for the significant amount of slaveholders who insisted that such 'laziness' was a natural racial characteristic of Black folk, one that they claimed required driving and White control to vitiate. Likewise Whites stereotyped Black women and men as hyper-sexual in the transparent attempt to justify Whites' sexual terrorism. Literary representations such as Jehu also naturalised slaves' thievery, as though it were a racial characteristic, like Samuel Cartwright so vociferously claimed, rather than a symptom of the deprivation in which White Americans forced Black folk to live. Slave loyalty was also sometimes presented as 'earned', like the Greeks; however, female-authored plantation novels in particular portrayed slaves whose loyalty to the 'superior race' was not only a natural, racial characteristic, but approached the level of worship. The distinguishing characteristic of White Americans' stereotyping of Black slaves and freedmen is the rejection of their common humanity in favour of imputing Black folk with unbridgeable, natural, and racial difference.

Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Future Research

There are several limitations to this study, chief of which is that it contains a survey of only two ancient literary genres. Future study needs to incorporate philosophy, history, as

well as political and forensic oratory. The philosophers Plato, Aristotle, and Xenophon, each only addressed in passing in this paper, must be examined systematically, because they each wrote somewhat extensively on the subject of slave management, which can be valuably compared to both antebellum and industrial management treatises written by White Americans.

Aristotle in particular merits attention due to the fact that his comments on environmental determinism are routinely misquoted and truncated in order to support arguments about ancient Greece's supposed racism. These philosophers also provide insight into ancient slaveholders' punishment techniques as well as their attitudes toward how unchecked power over slaves has the potential to corrupt the moral character of the master. A comparative perspective would be helpful in determining the extent to which such attitudes are guided by social structure as opposed to the inherent power relations in any master-slave relationship.

Future comparative research should also address the representation of slaves in visual mediums. Kelly Wrenhaven in *Reconstructing the Slave* has taken steps in this direction by comparing terracotta dolls of Thracian nurses with American images of the Mammy construct, but a more systematic comparison of ancient and modern slave depictions is in order so as to foreground the fact that the dehumanising and grotesque visual depictions of Black women in the modern period, such as is surveyed by Janell Hobson in *Venus in the Dark*, are entirely absent from the ancient Greek context.

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