

# Slavery

## INTRODUCTION

MORALISTS and political philosophers who appear to be in substantial agreement on the principles of justice differ remarkably from one another on whether slavery is just. The sharpness of this disagreement is made all the more remarkable by the almost unanimous condemnation of slavery—in two senses of that term.

As appears in the chapter on TYRANNY AND DESPOTISM, the condition of those who live under tyrannical rule is generally conceived as a kind of slavery, involving not only the loss of political freedom but also the suffering of other abuses or injuries. With the possible exception of Hobbes, who says that tyranny is merely monarchy “misliked,” none of the great authors from Plato and Aristotle to Rousseau, Hegel, and J. S. Mill, writes of tyranny except as a perversion of government—unjust, lawless, or illegitimate. The evil of tyranny for them lies in the enslavement of men who deserve to be free, who should govern themselves or at least should be governed for their own good, not exploited by a ruler who uses them for his own private interests.

Some writers, like Montesquieu, who tend to identify despotism and tyranny see little difference between subjection and slavery, regarding both alike as degradations. Yet Montesquieu—and with him Aristotle—also thinks that for certain races of mankind subjection or slavery may be justified. Mill later makes the comparable point that for a people at a certain stage of political development, subjection may be necessary for a time in preparation for citizenship. The two basic distinctions in political status which are here implied—between slavery and subjection and between subjection and citizenship—are developed more fully in

the chapter on CITIZEN. The first of these distinctions relates to the difference in the condition of men under tyranny and under benevolent despotism; the second, to the difference in the condition of men under absolute and under constitutional government.

The other sense in which the word “slavery” seems always to be used with the connotation of evil is the sense in which Augustine speaks of man’s slavery to lust as a consequence of original sin; or in which Spinoza writes of human bondage—the condition of men enslaved by the tyranny of their passions—as compared with human freedom under the rule of reason. This meaning of slavery is discussed in other chapters, such as EMOTION and LIBERTY.

The slavery which results from the tyranny of the passions is a disorder from which any man may suffer; it stems from a weakness in the human nature which is common to all. Similarly, the slavery of a whole people under tyrannical rule is a perversion of government for all the members of the community, not just for some. But whenever slavery is defended, it is justified only for *some men* within a community, not for all; or if for a whole people, not for all mankind, but only for *certain peoples* under certain conditions. With regard to slavery, the basic issue of justice is, therefore, whether *some* men should be slaves or *all* should be free, not whether *all* should be slaves or *all* free.

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN the slavery of some men within a community and the enslavement of a whole people appears to be related to the distinction between economic and political enslavement. In the ancient meaning of the word “economic,” the economic slave is

the slave of the household or family. "A complete household," writes Aristotle, "consists of slaves and freemen." The elements of a family are "master and slave, husband and wife, father and children."

That the distinction between the chattel slave and the freeman signifies economic rather than political status for Aristotle, and for the ancients generally, seems to be indicated by the fact that, under certain types of oligarchic constitution, freemen are excluded from citizenship without thereby becoming slaves. But in all ancient republics, democratic as well as oligarchic, chattel slaves are ineligible for citizenship.

Though the relation of master and slave is essentially economic rather than political, such slavery has a political aspect in the sense that some men have no function in the state except to serve other men. Aristotle speaks of them as necessary to the state, but not, as are citizens, parts of it. "The necessary people," he says, "are either slaves who minister to the wants of individuals, or mechanics and laborers who are the servants of the community."

The mark of economic slavery seems to be the kind of work human beings do and the conditions under which they labor, whereas political slavery seems to depend upon the kind of life human beings lead and the conditions under which they live in society. The economic slave serves a master by his work. The political slave lives under a tyrant. In Aristotle's view it is only the man who is economically free who has anything to lose from being enslaved by a tyrant. "No free man, if he can escape from it, will endure such government," he writes; but the barbarians, who "are by nature slaves," do not rebel against tyranny. Where some men are by nature free, there is also a natural distinction between women and slaves, "but among barbarians," according to Aristotle, "no distinction is made between women and slaves, because there is no natural ruler among them: they are a community of slaves, male and female." Veblen, in *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, opts for a purely economic interpretation of slavery: "There is reason to believe that the institution of ownership has begun with the ownership of

persons, primarily women. The incentives to acquiring such property have apparently been: (1) a propensity for dominance and coercion; (2) the utility of these persons as evidence of the prowess of their owner; (3) the utility of their services."

The difference between economic bondage—which can include what Marx calls the wage slavery of the proletariat, as well as chattel slavery and other forms of serfdom—and the political condition of those enslaved by a tyrant does not seem to affect the issue of justice. Those, like Hobbes and Locke, who think that the vanquished in war must pay for being allowed to live by submitting to slavery, do not seem concerned whether the servitude takes the form of private possession by an individual master or the subjugation of a whole people by the conquering state. Nor do those, like Aristotle and Montesquieu, who regard some men or some races as naturally servile, seem to offer reasons for political slavery different from those which they think justify economic servitude.

What does seem to affect the issue concerning the justice of slavery is the difference between the natural slave and the slave by force or law. This is the difference between the man who is born a slave (not merely born of slaves and into slavery) and the man who, born with a nature fit for freedom, is made a slave, either because his parents before him were slaves, because he is sold into slavery, or because, for one reason or another, he forfeits his birthright to freedom.

If no men are by nature slaves, then the only questions of justice concern the conditions which justify making slaves of freemen. These may remain the only questions even if there are natural slaves, since it cannot be unjust to treat as slaves those who are by nature slaves, any more than it is unjust to treat animals as brutes.

In both cases some consideration may be given to how slaves or animals should be treated. "The right treatment of slaves," Plato declares in the *Laws*, "is to behave properly to them, and to do to them, if possible, even more justice than to those who are our equals." Justice also requires, according to

Plato, that if a slave or an animal do any harm, the master shall pay for the injury.

WE HAVE ALREADY observed that, with regard to natural slavery, the main issue is one of fact. The fact in question concerns human equality and inequality. Within that equality of all men which rests upon their common possession of human nature, are some men by nature inferior to others in their use of reason or their capacity for leading the life of reason? Does such inferiority prevent them from directing their own lives or even their own work to the ends which are the natural fulfillment of man's powers? And if so, do not such men profit from being directed by their superiors, as well as from serving them and, through serving them, participating in the greater good their betters are able to achieve?

These are the questions of fact which Aristotle seems to answer affirmatively as he develops his theory of natural slavery. If the facts are granted, then no issue of justice arises, for Aristotle can say that "the slave by nature and the master by nature have in reality the same interests." It is by the justice inherent in the relation of master and slave *when both are naturally so related* that Aristotle can criticize the injustice of all *conventional* forms of slavery. But the question of fact must be faced, as Aristotle himself is aware.

"Is there any one intended by nature to be a slave," he asks, "and for whom such a condition is expedient and right, or is all slavery a violation of nature?" Aristotle recognizes that "others affirm the rule of a master over slaves to be contrary to nature and that the distinction between slave and free man exists by law only, and not by nature, and being an interference with nature is therefore unjust." He himself questions the justice of making slaves of captives taken in war, for that may violate the natures of men of high rank who have had the misfortune to be captured or sold. But he thinks that the same kind of difference which exists between male and female—the male being by nature superior, the female inferior; the one ruling, the other submitting to rule—can be extended to all mankind.

"Where there is such a difference," Aristot-

le explains, "as that between soul and body, or between men and animals . . . the lower sort are by nature slaves, and it is better for them as for all inferiors that they should be under the rule of a master. For he who can be, and therefore is, another's and he who participates in a rational principle enough to apprehend, but not to have, such a principle, is a slave by nature; whereas the lower animals cannot even apprehend a principle; they obey their instincts. And indeed the use made of slaves and of tame animals is not very different; for both with their bodies minister to the needs of life . . . If men differed from one another in the mere forms of their bodies as much as the statues of the gods do from men, all would acknowledge that the inferior class should be slaves of the superior. And if this is true of the body, how much more just that a similar distinction should exist in the soul . . . It is clear, then, that some are by nature free, and others slaves, and that for these latter slavery is both expedient and right."

According to the theory of natural slavery, it is as good for the slave to have a master as for the master to have a slave. This reciprocity of interest does not occur in legal or conventional slavery. In both types of slavery, the slave is a piece of property, a possession. Whether by nature or by institution, a slave does not own himself; he is another's man. "He may be called another's man," Aristotle says, "who, being a human being, is also a possession." Does this mean that the slave belongs wholly to the master, in all that he is and has? He would seem to belong to his master insofar as he is a *possession*; but not wholly—in all that he is and has—insofar as he is a *human being*. Aristotle does not introduce such a qualification where he says that "the slave is a part of the master, a living but separated part of his bodily frame"; yet he adds: "where the relation of master and slave is natural they are friends and have a common interest, but where it rests merely on law and force, the reverse is true."

Aristotle considers the difference between the natural slave and other forms of personal property, whether domestic animals, beasts of burden, or the inanimate instruments used in

the household for productive purposes. Do slaves, he asks, have any excellence "beyond and higher than merely instrumental and ministerial qualities" of the sort to be found in tools and animals? Do they have virtues, and if so, then "in what way will they differ from freemen?"

Aristotle answers by saying that "since they are men and share in the rational principle, it seems absurd to say that they have no virtue." But since the rational principle in them is weak and consists only in the ability to execute decisions—not to make them or to know the end for which they are made—the slave will have a capacity for only so much virtue as he requires; enough virtue, for example, to "prevent him from failing in his duty through cowardice or lack of self-control."

It is precisely because of his limited competence and virtue that the slave needs, and profits by having, a master. Aristotle thinks that he is better off than the artisan out of bondage. "The slave shares in his master's life; the artisan is less closely connected with him, and only attains excellence in proportion as he becomes a slave. The meaner sort of mechanic has a special and separate slavery, and whereas the slave exists by nature, not so the shoemaker or other artisan."

The "separate slavery" of the artisan makes him more like an animal or an inanimate tool in the way he is used; for, according to Aristotle, he is an instrument of production, while the natural slave participates in his master's life by being an instrument not of production, but of action. The work the slave does enables the master to live well—to achieve the happiness of the political or contemplative life—and since "life is action, not production . . . the slave is a minister of action." If the slave had in his own nature the capacity for human happiness, he would not be by nature a slave, nor be limited to the good of serving another man's happiness.

"Slaves and brute animals cannot form a state," Aristotle says, because "the state exists for the sake, not of life, but the good life" and slaves "have no share in happiness or in a life of free choice . . . No one assigns to a slave a share in happiness," he says in another place,

"unless he assigns to him also a share in human life." At best, that share could come only from being a part of the master and contributing to the master's happiness. But though to this extent "the slave by nature and the master by nature have in reality the same interests," the rule under which the slave lives "is nevertheless exercised primarily with a view to the interest of the master."

ARISTOTLE'S DOCTRINE of natural slavery is rejected by those who affirm the fundamental equality of all men in their common humanity and who, in addition, insist that their inequality as individuals in talent or capacity, should not affect their status or determine their treatment. On these grounds, Roman Stoics and Christian theologians seem to agree—and with them such modern thinkers as Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, and Mill—that all men are by nature born to be free. Freedom, writes Kant, belongs "to every man in virtue of his Humanity. There is, indeed, an innate Equality belonging to every man which consists in his right to be independent of being bound to others . . . in virtue of which he ought to be *his own master by Right*." That "all persons are deemed to have a *right* to equality of treatment" seems to follow for Mill from the principle that "one person's happiness, supposed equal in degree (with the proper allowance made for kind), is counted for exactly as much as another's." The "equal claim of everybody to happiness" involves "an equal claim to all the means of happiness," among them freedom.

But though theologians like Augustine and Aquinas deny that slavery is instituted by nature, they do not seem to regard it as contrary to natural law or to the will of God. Something can be according to natural law in two ways, Aquinas says: "First, because nature inclines thereto . . . Secondly, because nature does not require the contrary." Just as we can say, in the second sense, that nakedness is natural for man, "because nature did not give him clothes, but art invented them," so we can say that all men are by nature free because slavery was not instituted by nature, "but devised by human reason for the benefit of human life."

The institution of slavery, whereby one man

belongs to another for his use, seems due to the fallen nature of man, as one of the penal consequences of original sin. If man had remained in a state of innocence, one man would have ruled another for the latter's good, but no man would have been the master of slaves to be used for the master's good. Since "it is a grievous matter to anyone to yield to another what ought to be one's own," it follows, says Aquinas, that "such dominion necessarily implies a pain inflicted on the subject." This painfulness of slavery in turn seems to imply a contradiction to Aristotle's view that slavery fits certain natures and is for their benefit.

"By nature, as God first created us," writes Augustine, "no one is the slave either of man or of sin." Both sorts of slavery are "introduced by sin and not by nature." Both are punishments for sin, though one seems to Augustine more grievous than the other. "It is a happier thing," he says, "to be the slave of a man than of a lust; for even this very lust of ruling . . . lays waste men's hearts with the most ruthless dominion. Moreover, when men are subjected to one another in a peaceful order, the lowly position does as much good to the servant as the proud position does harm to the master."

Not sin, but climate, according to Montesquieu, is the cause of slavery and to some extent its excuse. Though he thinks that "the state of slavery is in its own nature bad . . . neither useful to the master nor to the slave," Montesquieu, like Hippocrates before him, regards the Asiatics as reduced to servility by the physical conditions of their life. "There reigns in Asia," he writes, "a servile spirit which they have never been able to shake off." Under Asiatic despotism, where whole peoples live in political servitude, domestic slavery is more tolerable than elsewhere. In those countries "where the excess of heat enervates the body, and renders men so slothful and dispirited that nothing but the fear of chastisement can oblige them to perform any laborious duty: slavery is . . . more reconcilable to reason."

Montesquieu seems to accept Aristotle's doctrine with some qualifications. "Aristotle endeavours to prove that there are natural slaves; but what he says is far from proving

it. If there be any such, I believe they are those of whom I have been speaking." Slavery is both natural and unnatural. "As all men are born equal," Montesquieu declares, "slavery must be accounted unnatural, though in some countries it be founded on natural reason . . . Natural slavery, then, is to be limited to some particular parts of the world." But in arguing the right of Europeans "to make slaves of the negroes," he concludes with the equivocal remark that "it is impossible for us to suppose these creatures to be men, because, allowing them to be men, a suspicion would follow that we ourselves are not Christians."

Writing about conditions in the United States toward the middle of the 19th century, Tocqueville compares the status of the indigenous Indians with that of the imported African blacks. "The Indians die as they have lived, in isolation; but the fate of the Negroes is in a sense linked with that of the Europeans. The two races are bound one to the other without mingling; it is equally difficult for them to separate completely or to unite." He then goes on to say that "the most formidable evil threatening the future of the United States is the presence of the blacks on their soil." Whether 20th-century efforts at integration will be able finally to overcome the evils of segregation still remains to be seen.

Hegel's comment on the enslavement of African negroes by Europeans runs somewhat differently. "Bad as this may be," he writes, "their lot in their own land is even worse, since there a slavery quite as absolute exists." But though Hegel thinks that the negroes are naturally given to slavery, he regards "the 'natural condition' itself as one of absolute and thorough injustice." To remove this injustice, however, is not easy. "Man must be matured" for freedom, Hegel writes. "The gradual abolition of slavery is therefore wiser and more equitable than its sudden removal."

Tocqueville distinguishes between ancient and modern slavery by the fact that "in antiquity the slave was of the same race as his master and was often his superior in education and enlightenment . . . The modern slave differs from his master not only in lacking freedom but also in his origin. You can make

the Negro free, but you cannot prevent him facing the European as a stranger."

Mill, like Hegel, also looks upon slavery as a stage in the rise of certain peoples from savagery to political life, and maintains that the transition to freedom must be gradually effected. "A slave properly so called," he says, "is a being who has not learnt to help himself. He is, no doubt, one step in advance of a savage. He has not the first lesson of political life still to acquire. He has learnt to obey. But what he obeys is only a direct command. It is the characteristic of *born* slaves to be incapable of conforming their conduct to a rule, or a law . . . They have to be taught self-government, and this, in its initial stage, means the capacity to act on general instructions." Extenuations of the injustice of ruling men as slaves, such as those proposed by Hegel and Mill, are rejected by Rousseau.

The notion that some men are by nature slaves, whether in Asia or in Europe, seems to Rousseau to be an illusion due to the fact that those who are made slaves by force have had their natures debased to slavishness. Aristotle, he says, "took the effect for the cause. Nothing can be more certain than that every man born in slavery is born for slavery. Slaves lose everything in their chains, even the desire of escaping from them . . . If then there are slaves by nature, it is because there have been slaves against nature. Force made the first slaves, and their cowardice perpetuated the condition."

It is sophistry, he thinks, for philosophers to "attribute to man a natural propensity to servitude, because the slaves within their observation are seen to bear the yoke with patience; they fail to reflect that it is with liberty as with innocence and virtue; the value is known only to those who possess them, and the taste for them is forfeited when they are forfeited themselves."

THE ISSUE CONCERNING slavery as a social or legal institution does not seem to be resolved by the views men take of natural slavery. Aristotle, who holds that *only* natural slavery is justified, criticizes those who "affirm to be unjust and inexpedient in their own case what they are not ashamed of practising towards

others; they demand just rule for themselves," he writes, "but where other men are concerned they care nothing about it. Such behavior is irrational, unless the one party is, and other is not, born to serve." This cannot be determined by conquest. Aristotle questions, therefore, the convention "by which whatever is taken in war is supposed to belong to the victors," or the principle that "because one man has the power of doing violence and is superior in brute strength, another shall be his slave and subject." Those who "assume that slavery in accordance with the custom of war is justified by law," are confronted by Aristotle with the question: "What if the cause of the war be unjust?"

Hobbes and Locke appear to take an opposite view. Men in a state of nature are free, though they can actually enjoy only as much freedom as they have power to secure. Yet the natural inequality in their powers does not establish a natural right on the part of the stronger to enslave the weaker. Hobbes makes the right of mastership or what he calls "despotic dominion" depend not merely upon victory in war, but upon a covenant into which the vanquished enter voluntarily, "when the vanquished, to avoid the present stroke of death, covenanteth . . . that so long as his life, and the liberty of his body, is allowed him, the victor shall have the use thereof at his pleasure." Only "after such covenant is made, the vanquished is a servant, and not before . . . It is not, therefore, the victory, that giveth the right of dominion over the vanquished, but his own covenant." That Hobbes means chattel slave when he says "servant," seems to be indicated by his remark that "the master of the servant is master also of all he hath, and may exact the use thereof; that is to say, of his goods, of his labour, of his servants, and of his children, as often as he shall think fit."

Locke disagrees with Hobbes that one man can give another the right to enslave him by contracting to become a slave in order to avoid death. "A man not having the power of his own life," he writes, "cannot by compact, or his own consent, enslave himself to anyone . . . Nobody can give more power than he has himself; and he that cannot take away

his own life, cannot give another power over it." As among the ancient Jews, men can sell themselves into temporary service to requite a debt. But this was a kind of drudgery, not slavery; "the person sold was not under an absolute, arbitrary, despotical power, for the master could not have the power to kill him at any time, whom at a certain time he was obliged to let go free out of his service." No Jew, Aquinas concurs, "could own a Jew as a slave absolutely, but only in a restricted sense, as a hireling for a time. And in this way the Law permitted that through stress of poverty a man might sell his son or daughter."

Absolute slavery, for Locke, "is nothing else but the state of war continued between a lawful conqueror and a captive." It is lawful, he thinks, to kill a violent aggressor, "for to that hazard does he justly expose himself whoever introduces a state of war, and is aggressor in it." But he who has forfeited his life necessarily forfeits his freedom. Slaves, then, are those "who, being captives taken in a just war, are by right of nature subjected to the absolute dominion and arbitrary power of their masters." In contrast to the limited servitude which a man can contract for wages, absolute slavery "is the effect only of forfeiture which the aggressor makes of his own life when he puts himself into the state of war with another."

Against Locke and Hobbes, as well as Aristotle, Rousseau denies that there is any justice in slavery—by nature, by covenant or compact, or by right of war. To think as Hobbes appears to, that "the child of a slave comes into the world as a slave," is, in Rousseau's opinion, to say that "a man shall come into the world not a man." Holding that slavery is "contrary to nature," Rousseau also holds that it "cannot be authorized by any right or law." A man cannot alienate his freedom by selling himself into slavery, for "to renounce liberty is to renounce being a man."

In Kant's language, "a contract by which the one party renounces his *whole* freedom for the advantage of the other, ceasing thereby to be a person and consequently having no duty even to observe a contract, is self-contradictory, and is therefore of itself null and void." Agreeing that such a contract is a nullity,

Hegel holds that the "slave has an absolute right to free himself," but he adds that "if a man is a slave, his own will is responsible for his slavery . . . Hence the wrong of slavery lies at the door not simply of enslavers or conquerors, but of the slaves and the conquered themselves."

As for Hugo Grotius and the others who "find in war another origin for the so-called right of slavery"—on the ground that "the victor having . . . the right of killing the vanquished, the latter can buy back his life at the price of his liberty"—Rousseau thinks their argument begs the question. "The right of conquest," he says, "has no foundation other than the right of the strongest. If war does not give the conqueror the right to massacre the conquered peoples, the right to enslave them cannot be based upon a right which does not exist."

Since Rousseau denies that victory gives the victors a right to kill those who have laid down their arms, he regards it unfair to make the captive "buy at the price of his liberty his life, over which the victor holds no right . . . From whatever aspect we regard the question," he concludes, "the right of slavery is null and void, not only as being illegitimate, but also because it is absurd and meaningless. The words *slave* and *right* contradict each other and are mutually exclusive."

IN MODERN AS WELL AS ancient times, in the European colonies in the New World if not in Europe itself, slave labor characterizes a certain type of economy and determines the mode of production, especially in agriculture and mining. The slave as chattel is bought and sold like other property. He may be a source of profit to his owner in exchange as well as in production. The traffic in slaves depends upon an original acquisition, either through the spoils of war or by the activity of slave traders who hunt men as if they were animals, to transport them in chains and sell them into slavery.

In the ancient world, individual slave owners emancipated their slaves, even as, under modern feudalism, a great landowner like Prince Andrew in *War and Peace* freed his

serfs. Aristotle speaks of those in his own time who opposed the institution of slavery; and the Roman Stoics did a great deal to ameliorate the condition of the slave and to protect him legally against abuse. But there seems to have been no political party or active political movement among the ancients corresponding to the abolitionists and their struggle in the 18th and 19th centuries. Even then, however, the abolitionists were looked upon as a radical minority who had no respect for the rights of property in their overzealous sentimentality about the rights of men. Those who were willing to outlaw the African slave trade as outrageous were less outraged by the treatment of men as chattel, once they were possessed.

Madison, for example, referring to the prohibition affecting the importation of slaves into the United States, which the Constitution postponed until 1808, thinks it "a great point gained in favor of humanity, that a period of twenty years may terminate forever, within these States, a traffic which has so long and so loudly upbraided the barbarism of modern policy." But in another paper the writers of *The Federalist* present their version of the Southern argument defending the Constitution's apportionment of representation, "determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three-fifths of all other persons." They do not object to the view of the negro slave as two-fifths property and three-fifths a person, confessing themselves reconciled to reasoning which, though "it may appear a little strained in some points," appeals to a principle they themselves approve, namely, that "government is instituted no less for the protection of property than of persons."

There are even those, in the 18th century, who defend the slave trade. Boswell reports an argument set forth by Dr. Johnson in favor of granting liberty to a negro, who claimed his freedom before a Scottish Court of Session. The sum of Dr. Johnson's argument, according to Boswell, came to this: "No man is by nature the property of another; the defendant is, therefore, by nature free. The rights of nature must be in some way forfeited before they

can be justly taken away . . . and if no proof of such forfeiture can be given, we doubt not but the justice of the court will declare him free." Admitting that Johnson may have been right in the particular case at hand, Boswell protests his general attitude toward slavery and the slave trade.

"To abolish a status," Boswell writes, "which in all ages God has sanctioned, and man has continued, would not only be robbery to an innumerable class of our fellow-subjects; but it would be extreme cruelty to the African savages, a portion of whom it saves from massacre, or intolerable bondage in their own country, and introduces into a much happier state of life, especially now when their passage to the West Indies and their treatment there is humanely regulated."

Issues of justice aside, economists like Adam Smith and Marx question the productivity of slave labor. Improvements in machinery "are least of all to be expected," writes Smith, when the proprietors "employ slaves for their workmen. The experience of all ages and nations, I believe, demonstrates that the work done by slaves, though it appears to cost only their maintenance, is in the end the dearest of any. A person who can acquire no property, can have no interest but to eat as much, and to labor as little as possible." He explains the lack of mechanical progress in Greece and Rome by the fact that "slaves . . . are very seldom inventive; and all the most important improvements in machinery, or in the arrangement and distribution of work, which facilitate and abridge labor, have been the discoveries of free men."

Marx also judges "production by slave labor" to be "a costly process . . . The principle, universally applied in this method of production," is "to employ the rudest and heaviest implements and such as are difficult to damage owing to their sheer clumsiness. In the slave-states, bordering on the Gulf of Mexico, down to the date of the civil war, ploughs constructed on old Chinese models, which turned up the soil like a hog or a mole, instead of making furrows, were alone to be found."

But Marx does not limit his judgment of slavery to criteria of efficiency, nor does he limit his consideration of servitude to its more



obvious forms of chattel slavery and feudal serfdom. For him, all use of labor by those who own the instruments of production involves exploitation; it differs only in the degree to which the owner derives a surplus value from the labor power he possesses, through property rights or wage payments.

According to Marx, "the essential difference between the various economic forms of society, between, for instance, a society based on slave labor and one based on wage labor, lies only in the mode in which this surplus-labor is in each case extracted from the actual producer, the laborer." As all the value produced by a slave, in excess of the cost of keeping him alive, profits his owner, so during "the period of surplus-labor, the usufruct of the labor-power creates a value for the capitalist that costs him no equivalent . . . In this sense it is that surplus-labor can be called unpaid labor"—whether it is the labor of chattel or wage slaves.

Because a laborer is forced to sell his labor power in the open market in order to subsist, Marx regards his so-called "freedom" as a pious fiction. "The contract by which he sold to the capitalist his labor-power proved in black and white," Marx writes, "that he disposed of himself freely. The bargain concluded, it is discovered that he was no 'free-agent,' that the time for which he is free to sell his labor-power is the time for which he is forced to sell it."

Others take the view that there is a fundamental moral difference between chattel slaves and men who work for wages. Hobbes, for example, thinks that between slaves who "are bought and sold as beasts" and servants "to whose service the masters have no further right than is contained in the covenants made betwixt them," there is only this much in common—"that their labor is appointed them by another." In slightly varying terms, Aquinas, Locke, and Kant make a similar distinction between the free servant, or paid worker, and the slave. The point is summarized by Hegel as a difference between alienating to someone else "products of my particular physical and mental skill," and alienating "the whole of my time, as crystallized in my work." In the latter case, "I would be making into another's property the substance of my being."

Debating with Douglas, Lincoln insisted that political freedom was the difference between the white slaves of the North and the black slaves of the South. The legal right, won by the proletariat, to organize and strike, seems to be a difference which Marx himself recognizes between the wage earner and the bonded slave. Until his chains are struck, the slave is not in the position of the free workman to fight for political rights and privileges. Citizenship is not always extended to the laboring classes, but it is never conferred upon slaves.