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**4. Social Debt**

The introduction of this paper clarified how debt, though predominantly conceived of as a financial construct, is not seldom utilised to understand and give expression to the purpose and duties inherent to social relationships. Having already considered the insight which ancient theories of justice provide in conceptualising the moral difficulties and opportunities which accrue from debt, the following chapter extends this investigation of debt through justice into its role as supporter and promoter of a unified society via a study of Aristotle’s theory of friendship. Such a synthesis of these two theories will advance our understanding of debt, indebtedness and obligation most significantly because (in Hardie’s words), Aristotle’s books on both justice and friendship are about ‘nothing else’ but obligations.[[1]](#footnote-2) The chapter will therefore proceed by extending the investigation of debt to the social realm. Following on from Chapter Three’s establishment of a correlation between Aristotle's analysis of justice and our analysis of debt, it transfers his analysis almost directly into the language of social debts: X and Y are in a social relationship (e.g. parent-child), which in most cases will be one between unequals; X has certain debts to Y as does Y to X; the mutual "repayment" of debts (analogous to Aristotle’s just actions) between the two actually constitutes the relationship. The examples of Thrasymachus (Republic 1) and Solon (Ath.Pol.) demonstrate how a miscalculation of the repayment of these debts precipitates the dissolution of both the relationship and the polis-wide network of social relations. This abstract analysis of justice implicitly underlies Aristotle's subsequent analyses of relationships (1) of friendship and (2) within the household / oikos (husband-wife, master-slave, parent-child). The rest of the chapter looks at, and elaborates upon these Aristotelian passages, with supplementary evidence especially from Xenophon’s Oikonomikos. Further, it explores the extent to which these social relationships are understood directly in terms of, or compared to, creditor-debtor relationships by the Greek authors.

**4.1. Comprehending Social Debt through Distributive and Corrective Justice**

We shall proceed, therefore, by resuming the examination of Aristotle’s particular justice, of which note has already been taken of an overlap with debt which is so complete as to instil belief that Aristotle’s comments and conclusions concerning particular justice may be equally applied to the object of this study. Specifically, particular justice’s split into distributive (geometrically calculated) and corrective (arithmetically calculated) justice might provide elucidation when considering the differing social circumstances and distinctions which cause a similar split in how debt is calculated, namely: a geometric distribution corresponds to the return of “what is fitting”; an arithmetic to the return of “like for like”.[[2]](#footnote-5)

**4.1.1. Aristotle’s Descriptive Method**

Before describing how and why one type of justice, or one type of debt, is preferable to the other in any given circumstance, and thereby continuing this investigation in the highly theoretical, loaded terminology of Aristotle, it might be impressed upon the reader once more that Aristotle’s method of analysis is far more descriptive than proscriptive. When he writes that corrective justice seeks to supply ‘a corrective principle in private transactions,’[[3]](#footnote-6) whereas distributive justice seeks to achieve a fair distribution of ‘honour, wealth, and the other divisible assets of the community,’[[4]](#footnote-7) this technical-sounding pronouncement is in fact a description of the phenomena observed by Aristotle in real-life social relationships within the Greek polis. He is not telling us that one *should* fulfil private financial contracts on a like for like basis, nor that public windfalls *ought to* *be* distributed among the people on the basis of status or who is most deserving (desert), but rather that, according to his experience and research, the ordinary people of the city prove most satisfied, and society most harmonious, when their business is thus regulated. Accordingly, and when the sources allow, the forthcoming analysis of Aristotle’s theory will be supplemented with further, empirical examples from other authors such as Plato and Xenophon, which demonstrate the proofs out of which the theory grew. This should serve as a reminder to look past the intellectualism which characterises the Aristotelian corpus as we know it, and focus our minds on its grounding in the everyday affairs of ancient society, of which debt is no insignificant element.

**4.1.2. Differing Status, Wealth and Ability, and the Need for Geometric Calculation**

As distributive justice is centred on supplying the assets of the community in a manner deemed fairest to all, it is this type of justice which is best suited to analysing the operation of give-and-take, according to what is deserving or fitting, which comprises social debt. Social debt, which involves the countless obligations and services owed between those living together in society, from the basic societal components of nuclear families and the households they tend, to the ever-widening groups of the *phratry,* the *genos,* and the citizen body as a whole, simply cannot conform to the relatively simple and mechanical arithmetic calculation of returning like for like. Aristotle initially draws attention to this at 1131a20-1, during his description of distributive justice: ‘And it follows that justice involves at least four terms, namely, two persons for whom it is just and two shares which are just.[[5]](#footnote-8) Then, shortly after, comes the famous passage, ‘As a housebuilder is to a shoe-maker, so must so many shoes be to a house.’[[6]](#footnote-9) Though this line is most often invoked for the purpose of evaluating Aristotle’s analysis of trade, it is also, because of its teasing out the relationships between people in respect of their acts of give-and-take, equally applicable to an analysis of social debt. Further, because, as Danzig argues,[[7]](#footnote-10) (contra Meikle (1995, pp.134-5), Heath (1949, pp.274-75), Gauthier and Jolif (1970), and Johnson (1939, p.451)) the ratio between the two humans involved in such exchange, as of their two products, are qualitatively not equal, it is a geometically-calculated (τὸ ἀντιπεπονθὸς κατ᾽ ἀναλογίαν καὶ μὴ κατ᾽ ἰσότητα)[[8]](#footnote-11) form of equality and justice which is being sought.[[9]](#footnote-12) The conundrum which faces Aristotle, how one goes about achieving equality in a relationship between such unequals, is likewise most applicable to those hoping to achieve a better understanding social debt. While, in a financial contract, it can be easily arranged that goods are transferred only for other goods of a similar value, it is much less common that people lend a hand, or confer a benefit to other people of a similar endowment. Far more frequently we find the old advising the young, or the young tending the old; the rich supporting the poor, or the poor giving service to the rich. This is a realm which requires a geometric calculation; an attainment of fairness which accounts for differences in quality and capacity. It is in describing such a situation that Aristotle composed his theory of distributive justice, the type of justice which, though perhaps undemocratic due to its eschewing the blanket approach of egalitarianism,[[10]](#footnote-13) nonetheless constitutes the primary form of justice.[[11]](#footnote-14) As it strives to achieve equality for equals as well as the corresponding inequality for unequals,[[12]](#footnote-15) it reflects and accommodates the real differences in status, wealth and ability which exist in society, and thus begins on precisely the sort of pragmatic footing which is to be expected from a social analyst of Aristotle’s ilk.[[13]](#footnote-16)

**4.1.3. Unjust Inequality of Treating Equals as Unequals, and Unequals as Equals**

Such a geometric calculation is undoubtedly more complex than the arithmetic calculations of financial contracts or judicial punishment; a fact which, perhaps, explains Polemarchus’ difficulty in producing an articulate account of the corresponding type of debt – that which involves making fitting returns – when pressed to do so by Socrates.[[14]](#footnote-17) This difficulty is equally reflected in the struggle which pervades the pursuit of social harmony. If distributive justice is abandoned, however, and every man locks down his own assets to the deprivation of those beyond his closest sphere, following selfishness and personal interest over equity and the common good, then this behaviour, though insatiable, perpetual, and universal, to quote Hume once more, becomes ‘directly destructive of society.’[[15]](#footnote-18) Even if not abandoned, but merely eschewed in favour of a simpler, arithmetical calculation, such a process of standardising natural diversity achieves the same result.[[16]](#footnote-19) In the *Ethics,* Aristotle pronounces the problem with characteristic restraint: ‘it is when equals possess or are allotted unequal shares, or persons not equal equal shares, that quarrels and complaints (μάχαι καὶ ἐγκλήματα) arise.’[[17]](#footnote-20) In the *Politics* he is far more explicit: ‘the principle cause of stasis (αἵ στάσεις),’[[18]](#footnote-21) is when equals perceive that they are treated unequally, and likewise when unequals perceive that they are treated equally – ‘Those that desire equality enter on party strife (στασιάζουσι) if they think that they have too little although they are the equals of those who have more, while those that desire inequality or superiority do so if they suppose that although they are unequal they have not got more but an equal amount or less.’[[19]](#footnote-22) And again, ‘men stir up faction (στάσιν κινοῦσιν)’ either from jealously or when men ‘owing to their superiority are not willing to remain in a position of equality. And constitutions also undergo revolution when what are thought of as opposing sections of the state become equal to one another.’[[20]](#footnote-23) Such a departure from proportional – that is, geometrically calculated – justice in a society produces distrust both among individuals and towards society as a whole, as the unjust inequality which proceeds from treating equals as unequals, and unequals as equals. This rends the bonds of human society, erodes the mutual and cross-obligations with which the needs of the community are met, and brings about no lesser affliction than discord and *stasis.*[[21]](#footnote-24) Its opposite, harmony and social cohesion produced through the provision of inequality for unequals and equality for equals will be taken up at 4.1.6ff,

**4.1.3.1. Misapplication of Distributive Justice in Thrasymachus’ Account of the Unjust Man**

We find an excellent example of what Aristotle is talking about – the socially destructive force of wrongly applied distributive justice (equality for unequals, inequality for equals) – in Plato’s depiction of Thrasymachus, the famous sophist who succeeds Kephalos and Polemarchus in engaging Socrates in *Rep.*1. Thrasymachus asserts that the unjust man, who displays greed (πλεονεκτεῖν) on a large scale,[[22]](#footnote-26) always comes out with a profit and advantage for himself, whereas the just man hands over advantage to those who are stronger than him.[[23]](#footnote-27) Thrasymachus paints a picture of a society in which the corrupt, the selfish, and the scheming always rise to the top, as they either snatch the community’s assets for themselves, or are handed said advantages by the fair man who foregoes bribes, shuns nepotism, and concludes contracts in the manner in which they were intended.[[24]](#footnote-28) The just man is therefore left both financially and socially weaker than the unjust man, as his friends and family resent his unwillingness to benefit them and himself unjustly.[[25]](#footnote-29) The unjust man, on the other hand, who values his own profit and gain above all else,[[26]](#footnote-30) not only reaps the financial gains of his unscrupulousness, but also the social rewards which are owed to him through distributive justice. He contributes more to the city, via his ill-gotten gains,[[27]](#footnote-31) and therefore receives a greater share of admiration and honours from both the city and those who know him. The social cost of his injustice, however, is that his behaviour makes cooperation impossible, and the unjust man actually becomes the enemy of all.[[28]](#footnote-32) Because his motivation is to out-do everyone else in all things (πλεον-εκτεῖν),[[29]](#footnote-33) and to gain advantage solely for himself,[[30]](#footnote-34) the result is that both just people and other unjust people, all of whom are trampled down and cheated by him, feel slighted and resentful of his success.[[31]](#footnote-35) Faction and hatred takes the place of unity and friendship,[[32]](#footnote-36) and the bonds of the city are severed, just as Aristotle describes.

This example shows the neglect of distributive justice in two different ways. Most obviously, the neglect of the rules of office and the partiality to bribes and underhand dealings mean that the deserving are deprived of their share, while the unjust man and those he favours benefit disproportionately and undeservedly. The second manner in which distributive justice is neglected in this account is on a more intrinsic level. In his analysis of the situation he depicts, Thrasymachus judges just and unjust men according to the same principle, comparing them as equals with regards to their financial and social circumstances. However, they are not at all equal in this regard, as the advantages (and disadvantages) which their behaviour reaps for them, are attained according to very different rules of conduct: the one law-abiding and fair, the other his opposite. Under the rules of distributive justice, therefore, Thrasymachus ought to judge these men of unequal morality and action by a standard likewise unequal. That he does not do so is unsurprising, as it would be against Thrasymachus’ interests to correctly apply the rules of distributive justice. To do so would force him to admit of a very different conclusion to the one he is advocating, namely, that it is better to be unjust than to be just.

**4.1.3.2. Two Ways of Applying Distributive Justice**

If one were to attempt to apply Aristotle’s distributive justice to the case of Plato’s Thrasymachus, this could be done in either of two ways: Either unequal treatment be given to those who are unequal, which would mean judging the just man’s and the unjust man’s actions (as also the results of those actions), not according to the same measure (of financial and social distinction), but with measures weighted to better account for the impact of their actions on the cohesion of society. Alternatively, instead of enforcing inequality for such unequals, the opposite could be undertaken, andall of the outward projections of justice or injustice be equalised so that they might be deemed, and consequently treated, as equals. In Pone could say that there is an implicit argument about this second method of what Aristotle labels distributive justice. In the parable, a ring gives the wearer invisibility, so that he can commit injustice at will, gain an unearned distribution of goods, and remain unpunished.[[33]](#footnote-38) His injustice being made invisible by the effects of a magic ring, to all outward appearances he is no different to the just men who surround him. The ring is therefore a magical means by which to equalise the social consequences of the unjust versus the just man. This sets up Socrates’ attempt to disprove the conclusion that Glaucon provisionally draws from the parable: for Socrates, justice in the soul brings its own rewards... those very rewards which Glaucon’s parable would accord to the perfectly unjust man (Gyges). When, much later, we hear Plato’s conclusion about the parable, we learn that when this equalisation of the parties is achieved, it becomes clear that it really is the just man who gains riches and advantages,whereas the unjust man succumbs to shameful treatment and punishments. The just man attains the best offices, marries with the best families, and, in short, ‘everything that [was] said of the one [the unjust] I now repeat of the other [the just].’[[34]](#footnote-40) The unjust, on the other hand, are eventually, ‘caught and derided, and their old age is made miserable by the contumelies of strangers and townsfolk. They are lashed and suffer all things which you truly said are unfit for ears polite.’[[35]](#footnote-41) In the Gyges example, equalisation is achieved by removing the outward rewards and reputes of justice and injustice from the equation, and focussing inwards instead, on the just and unjust soul, which, in Plato’s theory of justice, is the true incarnation of the just and unjust man.[[36]](#footnote-42) Looked at in this way, it may be suggested that Socrates’ understanding of justice is in fact a kind of “distributive justice,” and a giving of “what is fitting” (akin to Polemarchus’ discussion). The example demonstrates how a world which promotes justice and condemns injustice – as a correct application of distributive justice allows – will bring, not only moral, but eventually even material gain and social advantage to those who deserve it. Misapplied distributive justice, however, as it features under Thrasymachus’ treatment, proves only to turn even the oldest and most revered societal precepts on their heads, and incite insecurity, distrust and faction in a society thus undermined.

**4.1.3.3. Misapplication of Distributive Justice Within Debt Relationships: Solon**

As previously demonstrated, such misapplications of distributive justice bear consequences in the allocation of communal resources, the distribution of influential offices and state honours, and even in the basic tenets which underpin society’s moral dialogue. Likewise, in line with the finding that matters of justice apply unequivocally to matters of debt also, a similar misapplication of distributive justice within the debt relationships prior to the Classical period was found to have consequences so ruinous that it was deemed necessary to tear down the entablature of Athenian society, and then, under Solon’s direction, to rebuild it with what would become the standards of justice and equity which we encounter in the works of the Classical period. The Aristotelian *Constitution of the Athenians* constitutes our primary source of insight into both Solon’s undertaking and the iniquitous system of debt which provoked it.[[37]](#footnote-43) Indeed, in the *Politics,* Aristotle cites Solon’s restructure of property rights and property-acquisition legislation in the aftermath of the great debt scandal of the 6th century BC as a prime example of how society might defend itself against the social discord and *stasis* of which he deems unjust inequality/equalityof property and honours to be the cause.[[38]](#footnote-44)

**4.1.3.3.1. A Case for Distributive Justice**

The deep societal rift which Solon was called upon to close, as mentioned, was one primarily caused by debt. Both land mortgages (signified by boundary posts called ὅροι)[[39]](#footnote-45) ,[[40]](#footnote-46) and personal- or personally-secured business debt were at the heart of the matter, because the situation had arisen that, ‘Loans (οἱ δανεισμοί) were secured on the person... and the land was divided among few owners.’[[41]](#footnote-47) Though these debts were based on private contracts, which might suggest that they qualified under arithmetically-calculated corrective justice, in truth, they concerned both the ownership and use of the land on which the community was based, as well as the ownership and use of the citizens who populated that community; the latter because, as the debt was secured on the person, defaults resulted in many citizens and their family members being sold into slavery, often abroad.[[42]](#footnote-48) This double strike deprived the community of its two most important assets, making it unquestionably a matter for distributive justice.

Accordingly, there is evidence that Solon made an attempt at applying a geometric calculation of justice when he introduced his new constitution. He implemented the new measures of banning loans secured on the person and cancelling all debts, both private and public (χρεῶν ἀποκοπὰς ἐποίησε, καὶ τῶν ἰδίων καὶ τῶν δημοσίων),[[43]](#footnote-49) in what, the author of the *Ath. Pol.* notes, seemed a popular, democratic manner.[[44]](#footnote-50) However, his poetry tells us that he did so with the intention of giving to each individual and to each class that which would satisfy them:

*For to the people gave I grace enough,  
Nor from their honour took, nor proffered more;  
While those possessing power and graced with wealth,  
These too I made to suffer nought unseemly;[[45]](#footnote-51)*

,which indicateshis wish to align the levels of property and honour distributed among the citizens with their varying levels of need and status. That inequality for unequals was Solon’s intention is likewise evident:

... nothing did it please my mind  
By tyrannic force to compass, nor that in our fatherland  
Good and bad men should have equal portion in her fertile soil. [[46]](#footnote-53)

And finally, he describes his act of equalisation through thus cancelling debts and redistributing property, as ‘*Fitting straight justice unto each man's case*,’[[47]](#footnote-54) thus revealing his conceptualisation of the task in terms of justice. Bury and Meiggs summarise his intention so: ‘the privileges of each class should be proportional to the public burdens which it can bear.’[[48]](#footnote-55) By thus paying heed to the diverse make-up of the citizen body, that is, by allotting unequal shares to those who were unequal, Solon’s was clearly an attempt to solve his homeland’s debt troubles with measures that align with both his own concept of justice and Aristotle’s later description of (proportional) distributive justice. Indeed, the Aristotelian presentation of his reforms in the *Ath. Pol.* treats Solon as a champion of Aristotelian distributive justice – the sort of justice that, if correctly applied, ought to have produced harmony in Athens.

**4.1.3.3.2. Reasons for Failure**

Sadly, Solon’s reforms did not attain the social harmony for which he had hoped. Despite the myriad social improvements which they brought the populace, his reforms were popular with no-one. We are told that, ‘both the factions changed their attitude to him because the settlement had disappointed them. For the people had thought that he would institute universal communism of property, whereas the notables had thought that he would either restore the system in the same form as it was before or with slight alteration; but Solon went against them both.’[[49]](#footnote-56) Soon thereafter, renewed faction gave rise to the Peisistratid tyrants, who enslaved the people in a new way, notwithstanding their freedom from debt-bondage.[[50]](#footnote-57) The reasons for this can only be conjectured, but may include a failure to hit the right balance of proportion in his allocation of wealth and honours – a misapplication of distributive justice, as it were. In *Politics* 5 Aristotle comments on constitutional change which goes awry due to the combined will of democrats for all to be treated as equals in all things, and oligarchs for all to be treated as unequals in all things.[[51]](#footnote-58) These are two types of numerical equality, which, unlike proportional equality, fails to account for the whole context of people and society:

for the constitution to be framed absolutely and entirely according to either kind of equality is bad. And this is proved by experience, for not one of the constitutions formed on such lines is permanent. And the cause of this is that it is impossible for some evil not to occur ultimately from the first and initial error that has been made. Hence the proper course is to employ numerical equality in some things and equality according to worth in others.[[52]](#footnote-59)

Numerical and proportional equality correspond to the two types of justice – arithmetical and geometric – which are at the basis of the two fundamental forms of constitution (democracy and oligarchy). When one or other type of justice is applied wholly, to the exclusion of the other, in a society composed of a mixture of democrats and oligarchs, that is, of people of unequal worth, then harmony becomes impossible, ‘For *stasis* is everywhere due to inequality, where classes that are unequal do not receive a share of power in proportion.’[[53]](#footnote-60)

A concomitant explanation for the renewed faction which followed Solon’s reforms might lie in a failure to adequately re-educate the people, a step which Plato would later recommend so vehemently. While Solon’s poetry could be seen as an attempt to educate and explain his methods, it is clear that the atmosphere of distrust, generated under the previous constitution, persisted unabated, and Aristotle’s comments imply that the issue of greed among the populace was likewise unstemmed. He writes, in relation to Solon and other legislators of old, that it is not enough to ‘prescribe moderate property for all... since it is more needful to level men’s desires than their properties,’ which ‘can only be done by an adequate system of education enforced by law.’[[54]](#footnote-61) Thus failing to adequately educate the people in the benefits of a measured dispersal of property, greed and distrust flourished unabated, soon enveloping even Solon himself, who received accusations of having given special favour to his friends and associates, and making them rich when others were not.[[55]](#footnote-62) There seems to be an agreement between Aristotle’s treatment of distributive justice (and the failure to achieve it, which opens the door instead to *stasis*) with the specific account given of Solon’s reforms, which demonstrate one instance of a constitution that did not distribute property, status and other assets in an optimally proportionate way. Learning from such mistakes of the past, Aristotle had no doubt that the deliverance of a society unhampered by faction must lie in understanding and utilising his general treatment of distributive justice, and thereby acknowledging the different statuses and abilities of the populace, distributing the assets of the community in accordance with these differences, and training them in such a way that they throw off their tendency to insatiable greed and sit content in the awareness that none have been unjustly treated.[[56]](#footnote-63)

**4.1.4. Corrective Justice and Arithmetic Calculation**

Besides the community-based effort to gain harmony and justice which might be achieved with the help of geometrically-calculated distributive, particular justice also offers a means to achieve harmony within the private sphere, which Aristotle labels corrective justice. This performs a different role to distributive justice, and is therefore calculated by a different means: arithmetically.[[57]](#footnote-78) As corrective justice deals solely with private transactions and contracts (συναλλαγμάτων), it, unlike distributive justice, is not particularly concerned with matters of broader societal consideration, but is rather utilised for correcting, through simple equalisation, the various forms of unjust loss or gain on the assets transferred between private citizens, not the citizens themselves.[[58]](#footnote-79) Such equalisation need not acknowledge the types of character, or past actions of the people involved, and therefore equality between the parties is presumed, with corrective justice being sought solely with regards to the immediate unjust actions of either party.[[59]](#footnote-80) Aristotle further subdivides corrective justice into two classes, which he calls voluntary (ἑκούσια) and involuntary (ἀκούσια). The voluntary private transactions are all financial in nature, while the involuntary private transactions all relate to varying forms of crime.[[60]](#footnote-81)

**4.1.4.1. Overview of Voluntary Corrective Justice: Financial Debt**

Looking first at voluntary corrective justice, Aristotle says that these transactions are called such because they are entered into voluntarily; furthermore, they do not involve the common stock/assets, but rather are such private transactions as ‘selling, buying, lending at interest (δανεισμός), pledging, lending without interest (χρῆσις), depositing, letting for hire (μίσθωσις).’[[61]](#footnote-82) These are not only all financial in nature, but indeed are predominantly concerned with elements of financial debt. While lending with or without interest are obvious debt transactions, selling and buying also have the same structure as a debt transaction, albeit one in which the period of inequality or indebtedness is usually extremely fleeting, but may also sometimes be further prolonged by a system of paying the bill at the end of a month, or by allowing payment of a larger expense to be spread over several months.

Aristotle writes that the largest branch within the field of economic exchange (μεταβλητικῆς) is commerce (εμπορία), which is further divided into three parts, namely ship-owning, transport and marketing.[[62]](#footnote-83) Commercial activities, which deals with the importation of commodities lacking in one’s own country as well as the export of surplus products, are labelled ‘things indispensable,’ when their aim is the achievement of grace/favour (χάρις),[[63]](#footnote-84) and at securing the welfare of the state, whereas, when the same acts of commerce have their motive distorted – to aim at profit, for example – they become objectionable.[[64]](#footnote-85) The second largest branch within economic exchange, is money-lending (τοκισμός), we are told, which emphasises even further the significance of debt within the financial activities of the *polis*.[[65]](#footnote-86) The third largest form of commercial exchange is labour for hire (μισθαρνία). These exchanges of services follow the same structure of a debt transaction as in exchanges of goods. Pledging comes next, which, being a promise, creates a temporary state of inequality between equals with the intent to secure some benefit, and as such is a clear debt transaction. Likewise with depositing, which also creates inequality with the aim of securing a benefit, but in which, relative to pledging, the gaining and losing parties are inverted. Aristotle makes reference to bad consequences which result from not returning a deposit, which alludes to a threat of punishment in order to protect just relations.[[66]](#footnote-87)

**4.1.4.2. Cheating, the Unjust Price and Priority of the Creditor or Debtor**

Aristotle names defrauding or cheating (ἀποστέρησις) as the specific injustice which corrective justice seeks to protect against and correct in such financial voluntary transactions.[[67]](#footnote-88) There is some disagreement among scholars about whether this financial defrauding/cheating also includes a so-called ‘unjust’ price, or whether it is restricted to simple financial fraud and breach of contract.[[68]](#footnote-89) The resolution of this question has important implications about Aristotle’s view on the ethics of debt relations as, if it were true that Aristotle limits his concern to attaining justice in matters of fraud and breach of contract, it would mean that corrective justice primarily exists in order to support the creditor in debt transactions because, in the examples which he provides of financial transactions, it is primarily the creditor whose loss would thereby be corrected. The inclusion of unjust prices in Aristotle’s theory of voluntary corrective justice brings balance into the matter, as it seeks to attain justice for the buyer/debtor as well as the seller/creditor.

**4.1.4.2.1. The Case Against the Unjust Price**

Finley joins other critics in arguing for the restricted view, explaining that the agreement of price, because it is part of the transaction itself, precludes the buyer from subsequently claiming that the price was unjust.[[69]](#footnote-90) He refers to a passage in the *Nicomachean Ethics* in which Aristotle explains the connections between loss, gain and having one’s own, which we will soon explore more closely, and in which Aristotle proclaims to have ‘borrowed [this terminology] from the operations of voluntary exchange.’[[70]](#footnote-91) In this passage, Aristotle says that the voluntary transactions of buying, selling, etc., ‘are immune from the law,’ which, according to Rackham, means that the law does not give redress for inequality resulting from the contract.[[71]](#footnote-92) This has been interpreted by Joachim as a statement which means that the law gives immunity to the better bargainer, and Finley, seemingly both approves of this statement and deems it evidence that ‘unjust’ prices are excluded from Aristotle’s discussion on corrective justice in private transactions.[[72]](#footnote-93) This conclusion is unconvincing for the following reason: Aristotle states that, in buying and selling (ἐν τοῖς ὠνίοις), if both parties disagree on the price due, it is both inevitable and just (δίκαιον) ‘that the amount of the return should be fixed by the party that received the initial service,’[[73]](#footnote-94) and immediately reiterates this, saying that

it is thought fairer (δικαιότερον/more just) for the price to be fixed by the person who received credit (ἐπετράφθη) than by the one who gave credit (ἐπιτρέψαντος). For as a rule those who have a thing value it differently from those who want to get it. For one’s own possessions and gifts always seem to one worth a great deal; but nevertheless the repayment is actually determined by the valuation of the recipient (οἱ λαμβάνοντες).[[74]](#footnote-95)

This passage not only indicates that disagreement about the fairness of a price may naturally occur *during* the transaction, and not only subsequently, as implied by Finley; but also that Aristotle conceives of such disagreements about price in terms of justice and injustice, therefore proving that Aristotle’s voluntary corrective justice should be understood as concerning defrauding/cheating, both in terms of breach of contract, and also in terms of an ‘unjust’ price.

**4.1.4.2.2. Balanced Support: of Debtor on Price, of Creditor on Breach of Contract**

As already mentioned, the inclusion of unjust prices in Aristotle’s theory of voluntary corrective justice brings balance into his view on such financial debt relations, as it seeks to attain justice for both buyer/debtor as well as the seller/creditor, rather than weighting its support in favour of sellers/creditors alone. Indeed, without minimising the rightful support given to sellers and creditors in the case of a breach of contract, the preceding extracts indicate that, when it comes to deciding on a price, it certainly is not a case of the law disinterestedly supporting ‘the better bargainer,’ but rather that complete support should be granted to the buyer/debtor – he who is on the receiving end of the exchange. Aristotle further balances his proposed system by ensuring that the seller/creditor, too, is protected from unjust loss by basing the value of a good or service on what the receiver believes it to be worth *before* he receives it, rather than afterwards – stemming, no doubt, from his observation that ‘those who have a thing value it differently from those who want to get it,’ thus showing that carefully counterweighted justice for both parties, with the purpose of fostering social cohesion and κοινωνία, rather than a precise theory of exact commensurability, is his aim.[[75]](#footnote-96) Aristotle’s inclusion of unjust prices alongside breaches of contract in this system of voluntary corrective justice creates a system which provides balanced, bipartisan support, countering the injustice which either party is most at risk of suffering, and furthermore means that his views on financial justice in no way diverges from his oft repeated belief that balance in property, power and honours is the best means to achieve a stable constitution, and avoid *stasis*.[[76]](#footnote-97)

**4.1.4.3. Overview of Involuntary Corrective Justice**

In addition to voluntary corrective justice, Aristotle also outlines involuntary corrective justice, which relates to righting the wrongs, via retribution, of varying forms of crime. He mentions theft, adultery, poisoning, procuring, enticement of slaves, assassination and false witness, as well as assault, imprisonment, murder, robbery with violence, maiming, abusive language and insolent treatment.[[77]](#footnote-98) These are all acts in which one party suffers a loss (ζημία), while the other party is in a position of gain (κέρδος), having won an unfair advantage of one kind or another.[[78]](#footnote-99) Aristotle notes that, in some instances of involuntary injustice, such as striking another person, the terms ‘loss’ and ‘gain’ are not literally applied but, in calculating the damage sustained, they are nonetheless referred to as such.[[79]](#footnote-100) Proper maintenance of the social fabric of the state demands that any such undeserved gain must be equalised, which Greek society achieved by imposing a penalty (ζημία). The fact that the Greek word ζημία denotes both ‘penalty’ and ‘loss’ was likely significant in shaping Aristotle’s theory.[[80]](#footnote-101) This penalty is calculated according to arithmetic proportion and, therefore, in correcting these unjust gains and losses a judge looks only at the inequality caused by the unjust act, not, as in distributive justice, at both the act and the worth of the people involved.[[81]](#footnote-102) Involuntary corrective justice therefore assumes equality between the persons in question; treating them as equals in order to draw judgement only upon the unjust interaction at hand.[[82]](#footnote-103) Aristotle demonstrates that a good judge can impose equivalence simply by treating the parties as equals and then ensuring that each party has ‘after the transaction an amount equal to the amount one had before it,’[[83]](#footnote-104) and posits that his doctrine of the mean provides makes such imposed equivalence achievable, with the judge utilising penalties in order to equalise the extremes of undue loss or gain, in order to return peoples’ private affairs to the mean, which is when each party has their own (ἔχειν τὰ αὐτῶν).[[84]](#footnote-105) The penalty is thus ‘to take away from the party that has too much and... add to the one that has too little,’ and thereby makes the party that has too much suffer a comparable loss in the form of either physical punishment or monetary fines.[[85]](#footnote-106) Ross, Urmson and many others compare this system to modern day civil law, with the penalties resembling damages awarded, though some of these crimes would be prosecuted under criminal law today.[[86]](#footnote-107)

**4.1.4.3.1. Retribution and the Imprecision of Social Debt**

The penalty imposed by a judge on behalf of the community constitutes the payment of a debt that is owed, and a means to return to equality a relationship which has temporarily been made unequal through some act of involuntary injustice. Though this debt stems from a private transaction, and may be settled by means of a monetary fine, it is not a financial, but rather a social and moral debt as, to name a few examples, a proliferation of the crimes dealt with by involuntary corrective justice would damage social cohesion, while the risk of illegitimate heirs born out of adultery jeopardise the basic unit of the *polis –* the *oikos,*[[87]](#footnote-108) and the response to murder or assassination must entail, at most, blood vengeance, and at least, ritual purging of the stain of guilt [[88]](#footnote-109)– all of which are social and moral consequences. Being non-financial, however, the debt is difficult to quantify, a fact admitted by some scholars, while others simply ignore this problem.[[89]](#footnote-110) Aristotle provides no more than a vague outline of what constitutes returning to the victim ‘an amount equal to the amount one had before,’[[90]](#footnote-111) though he mentionsthe affliction of marks of dishonour and beating as methods of punishment*,* as well as pain in general, the quantity and quality of which is left unspecified;[[91]](#footnote-112) in contrast, the equalising of a monetary loss caused by theft is simple to quantify.[[92]](#footnote-113) On the other hand, the non-financial nature of social debt makes it non-transferable. This means that the penalty must be paid by the perpetrator, as in the marks of dishonour mentioned above, and must benefit the victim, the victim’s family and friends, or society in general, if the immediate victim is unable to receive the compensation for the injustice committed. The loss cannot be equalised merely by taking away the gain from the perpetrator, but must also involve a return of the loss to the victim.[[93]](#footnote-114) Thus, the imprecision pertaining to the type and level of punishment inflicted is counterbalanced by the precise stipulation of the people who are to pay or receive the social retribution. As noted, this is quite the opposite to the norms which govern the settlement of financial debt

**4.1.4.3.2. Aristotle and ‘Having One’s Own’**

In light of Aristotle’s reference to ‘having one’s own’ (ἔχειν τὰ αὐτῶν) while explaining involuntary corrective justice, a brief exploration of Aristotle’s use of this phrase might be appropriate. For Aristotle, like for Plato, the idea of ‘having one’s own’ is key to justice. Aristotle says that ‘when the whole has been divided into two halves, people then say that they “have their own,” having got what is equal (τότε φασὶν ἔχειν τὸ αὑτοῦ ὅταν λάβωσι τὸ ἴσον),’[[94]](#footnote-115) and then asserts his belief that this is the origin of the word ‘just.’ Whatever about the etymological accuracy of justice (δίκαιον) stemming from half (δίχα) and thus producing judge (δικαστής), which is Aristotle’s suggestion,[[95]](#footnote-116) it’s clear that he regards ‘having one’s own’ as being identical to equality, to which we might also add the previously noted equation between particular justice and equality.[[96]](#footnote-117) Thus, as both are equated with equality, it follows that ‘having one’s own’ must also be equatable with justice. This connection is further alluded to by the statement, that ‘the only lasting thing is equality in accordance with desert and the possession of what is their own.’[[97]](#footnote-118) Knowing that equality according to desert is how Aristotle describes geometrically calculated justice, it seems that ‘having one’s own’ is how he describes arithmetically calculated justice. This conclusion is further supported by the line, ‘when they have their own, they are then equal,’ in his explanation of yet another kind of arithmetically calculated transaction – reciprocity.[[98]](#footnote-119) Consequently, the idea of ‘having one’s own’ is identified with the concept of justice in a limited sense, though not in its complete sense, due to Aristotle’s differentiation between geometrically and arithmetically calculated justice.

**4.1.4.3.2.1. Greed/*Pleonexia***

Understanding ‘having one’s own’ (ἔχειν τὰ αὐτῶν) to be a description of justice in the arithmetical sense, one might also expect its apparent antonym, ‘having more than one’s share’ (πλεονεκτέω), to relate solely to the arithmetical calculation of injustice also; however, this is not so. While ‘having more than one’s share’ (πλεονεκτέω) is a word commonly used by Aristotle to denote injustice, for example, in the following description of an unjust judge, ‘if he knowingly gives an unjust judgement, he is himself taking more than his share (πλεονεκτεῖ), either of favour or of vengeance;’ as well as in his description of particular justice, where he writes ‘the term ‘unjust’ is held to apply to...the man who takes more than his due’ (ὁ πλεονέκτης),[[99]](#footnote-120) the injustice referred to by the word πλεονεκτέω is calculated neither solely arithmetically, nor by a solely geometric proportion, but rather, as ‘having more than one’s share’ is applicable to all of particular injustice, it is a word which encompasses particular injustice in its fullest sense. Furthermore, having more than one’s share is not only an act or a condition, but directly relates to πλεονεξία, which is that grasping greed, or excessive desire for gain, which Aristotle deems to be the root cause of all of particular injustice, and which is the main producer of civil strife.[[100]](#footnote-121) In his explanation of Aristotle’s πλεονεξία, Young describes it as having a desire for excessive gain, and illustrates this with an example expressed, as often in his analysis of justice, in the language of debt: he writes, ‘Suppose that I owe you some money. I might want to keep the money I owe you so that I will have more money rather than less. If I act on that desire... I will act unjustly.’[[101]](#footnote-122) To this example Young adds that πλεονεξία cannot simply be reduced to the wish to have more rather than less, but that it also involves desiring more than one’s fair share; which identifies that unfairness is at its heart.

**4.1.5. Arithmetical Reciprocity**

Following on from his discussion of collective justice, Aristotle reviews another form of arithmetically calculated transaction, mentioned briefly earlier, which is reciprocity (ἀντιπεπονθὸς). Reciprocity is taken by some, such as Irwin, Miller and Soudek, to be a third form of justice, albeit a controversial one, which was not announced by Aristotle when he explicitly divides particular justice into two forms, distributive and collective.[[102]](#footnote-123) However, many more scholars exclude reciprocity from Aristotle’s theory of justice, citing Aristotle’s assertion that ‘in many cases reciprocity is at variance with justice.’[[103]](#footnote-124) I don’t believe that there is a definitive answer to this question, but rather agree with Rosen[[104]](#footnote-125) in thinking that Aristotle’s references to reciprocity serve to introduce a new nuance to his exploration of justice as per Danzig’s conclusion, ‘Reciprocity is the act of making a just repayment, and therefore it is a form of the moral virtue, justice.’[[105]](#footnote-126) Reciprocity, as in ἀντιπεπονθὸς, simply means ‘receiving the same treatment in return,’ or ‘making a person experience that which he/she makes you experience,’ though it appears to be further subdivided by Aristotle into reciprocity based on proportion (τὸ ἀνάλογον), and that based on equality.[[106]](#footnote-127) Akin to his reference to the popular definition of justice as being ‘to have equality according to number, not worth,’[[107]](#footnote-128) he writes that people identify reciprocity with corrective justice, which, as seen, is calculated arithmetically.[[108]](#footnote-129) Aristotle’s own definition of reciprocity, however, is different to the popular one, as he sees that it is sometimes calculated by proportion, which represents justice, but sometimes by equality, which can be contrary to justice.[[109]](#footnote-130)

**4.1.6. Proportional Reciprocity: Inequality for Unequals**

Aristotle states that reciprocity based on proportion (rather than equality) represents a type of justice. This differentiation roughly matches the subdivisions of particular justice into that which is geometrically (proportionally) calculated, and that which is arithmetically calculated (or calculated based on equality).[[110]](#footnote-131) In his explication of the statement that in many cases reciprocity is ‘at variance with justice,’[[111]](#footnote-132) he includes an example which demonstrates how reciprocity on the basis of equality is contrary to justice. In the case of an officer striking a man, it is wrong for the man to strike the officer back, due to their inequality of status. Were the man to strike the officer, Aristotle deems that ‘it is not enough for the officer to strike him, but he ought to be punished as well.’[[112]](#footnote-133) He therefore recommends a type of reciprocity in the form of the geometric calculation of justice, which is according to worth, to correct such incidences of injustice between unequals.[[113]](#footnote-134) Calculated geometrically, reciprocity demands equal return for those who are equals and unequal return for those who are unequal, and this calculation is confirmed by Aristotle’s statement that ‘those who are unequal [must make matters equal] by making a return proportionate to the superiority of whatever kind on the one side.’[[114]](#footnote-135)

**4.1.6.1. Equality for Equals**

The other side of justice according to worth, or reciprocity based on proportion, is equality for equals, which aspect most clearly accounts for Aristotle’s statement that justice in the form of reciprocity ‘is the bond that maintains the association.’[[115]](#footnote-136) He writes that this type of justice produces the ability ‘to requite evil with evil’ and ‘to repay good with good’, and is what the ‘very existence of the state depends on.’[[116]](#footnote-137) For Aristotle, repayment and requital in the appropriate proportion and with the goal of restoring equality is not only the preservative of friendship, but it also encourages exchange (ἡ μετάδοσις) to take place.[[117]](#footnote-138) The import of such requital is, lastly, expressed in the starkest of terms by a supplementary comment, that, failing the existence of such proportional reciprocity, ‘no exchange takes place, and it is exchange that binds them [people] together,’[[118]](#footnote-139) thus cementing the role of proportional reciprocity, and, indeed, geometrically-calculated justice in facilitating the interpersonal exchanges inherent to social relationships, and therefore to society as a whole.

**4.1.7. Just Inequality and Grace/*Charis***

It is time, therefore, to explore what Aristotle means when he writes ‘It is by proportionate requital (τό ἀντιπεπονθός κατ᾽ ἀναλογίαν) that the city holds together’[[119]](#footnote-140). Aristotle’s explanation hinges on grace or *charis* (χάρις).[[120]](#footnote-141) He writes that the reason why the Greeks set up a shrine of the Graces in a public place is ‘to remind men to return a kindness; for that is a special characteristic of grace, since it is a duty (δεῖ) not only to repay a service done one, but another time to take the initiative in doing a service oneself.’[[121]](#footnote-142) The word δεῖ, as we know, is a word evoking the idea of debt.[[122]](#footnote-143) While, as mentioned, scholarship on this passage often conceptualises it from a standpoint of some ‘third’ iteration of justice, we learn from, e.g., Danzig’s account that it really is a mixed form, containing elements of both distributive and corrective justice.[[123]](#footnote-144) *Charis* consists of a give and a take, a form of reciprocity: ‘ἀντιπεπονθός,’ by which means one undertakes voluntary corrective justice (arithmetically calculated), but in a manner which takes into account the “worths” of the people involved (geometrically calculated.) It therefore takes into account the unequal roles which either party play in the exchange, and is a prime example of proportionality in justice, society and exchange. Danzig, further, highlights the two-part process of ἀντιπεπονθός. Unlike in direct exchange, the initial “give” is followed by a certain interval of time, before the return is made. He points out how, really, only the return is given expression (by the ‘ἀντι-’ prefix) in the term ἀντιπεπονθός.[[124]](#footnote-145) Though Aristotle lists many financial transactions as examples of voluntary corrective justice – selling, buying, renting – he also, as we earlier noted, includes two terms for loans: δανεισμός and χρῆσις, which Danzig posits are ideal examples of the two-part phenomenon of reciprocity, because ‘The act of making a loan is clearly distinct from the act of repayment that is to follow.’[[125]](#footnote-146) Proportionality is where these two distinct acts are sorted according to the worth of the agents. Even those who were equal at the outset are quickly beset by inequality which justice demands be reconciled, because, as Young discerns, the act of initiating benevolence makes the first party’s status becomes proportionally higher, so that it is then not enough to return merely an exact equivalent of whatever favour one has received.[[126]](#footnote-147) This proportionate difference in status means that, within the system of *charis*,an adequate return must consist of both the simple equivalent return and something else in addition.[[127]](#footnote-148) Aristotle suggests that the additional debt can be serviced by becoming the initiator of an act of benevolence the next time: ‘another time to take the initiative in doing a service oneself (καὶ πάλιν αὐτὸν ἄρξαι χαριζόμενον).’[[128]](#footnote-149) The intention is for the receiver of the benevolence to go, at a later date, to the original benefactor and initiate an act of benevolence himself, thereby strengthening the bond between them, and simultaneously beginning the next round of the ever-continuing duty to take the initiative and make the return.[[129]](#footnote-150) Within the sphere of social debt, this system of *charis,* which Aristotle draws upon as a near-synonym for proportionate requital, produces a figurative net of beneficial social indebtedness, with various parties receiving and returning good for good, (or evil for evil), in an ever-continuing loop brought about by the need to return the favour with something extra in addition. It provides a description of how everyone becomes indebted to everyone else and thus, with the majority spending their lives simultaneously in the role of both debtor and creditor, and therefore being permanently interconnected with the people around them, the result is a society tied together by their bonds of indebtedness.[[130]](#footnote-151)

**4.1.7.1. Contrasting *Charis* and Interest (τόκος)**

Applying this analysis to the sphere of financial debt draws a very different reaction from Aristotle, however, despite the similarity between the additional debt inherent to *charis* (of initiating a new cycle of benevolence at a future point), and the additional debt which accrues from the charging of interest (τόκος) on a financial loan. Aristotle is scathing in his remarks on the charging of interest, describing it as being ‘most reasonably hated’ (εὐλογώτατα μισεῖται) and ‘most contrary to nature’ (μάλιστα παρὰ φύσιν), both because it is a use of money contrary to the reason for which money was invented, and also because it is a means by which money increases itself without limit.[[131]](#footnote-152) At the same time, however, the equally limitless benevolence, which is born from an original act of benevolence and constitutes *charis*, is not only praised as an essential element of exchange and of the ensuing social cohesion which it ensures (τῇ μεταδόσει δὲ συμμένουσιν),[[132]](#footnote-153) but is actually directly contrasted with interest (τόκος) in the relevant passage, in a line translated by Rackham as, ‘For money was brought into existence for the purpose of exchange, but interest increases the amount of the money itself,’ which, however, actually reads ‘For exchange creates *charis*, whereas interest makes more of itself’ (μεταβολῆς γὰρ ἐγένετο χάριν, ὁ δὲ τόκος αὐτὸ ποιεῖ πλέον).[[133]](#footnote-154) The comparison between the additional initiation of benevolence with the additional payment of interest is therefore drawn by Aristotle himself, but the positivity inherent in his remarks on grace is only surmounted by the negativity of his views on the charging of interest, despite the similarities of their features. The reason for this difference in Aristotle’s estimation is not stated, but it appears that the two terms represent a “good” and “bad”, or virtuous and vicious form of (social) indebtedness – a suggestion which might call for future investigation.

**4.1.7.2. Explaining *Charis* Through Debt**

The close connection between *charis* and debt has been previously highlighted by Young, who, though he nowhere openly associates Aristotle’s theory of justice with debt, as I do, nonetheless draws on examples of debt, and uses the language of debt in order to elucidate Aristotle’s meaning. Young’s interpretation is as follows: ‘It is thus a theorem of Aristotelian grace that if you do me a kindness, I will be forever in your debt,’[[134]](#footnote-155) which he addends with a citation of Kant, who also expresses the point in terms of debt, ‘For even if I repay my benefactor tenfold, I am still not even with him, because he has done me a kindness that he did not owe. He was the first in the field... and I can never be beforehand with him.’ [[135]](#footnote-156) Young’s analysis goes further, when he asserts that, ‘the kindness done in return need not, and sometimes cannot, be done to the person who performed the original kindness. So it is, for example, with what we owe those responsible for our training in philosophy...’,[[136]](#footnote-157) from which we may note his continued use of the language of debt in explaining the nuances of this Aristotelian idea.

**4.1.7.2.1. Introducing Horizontal Repayment of Debt**

We might further note the usefulness of Young’s latter assertion in providing a refinement of the idea of human fairness, itself inherent to the existence of debt. Recall Atwood’s observation (2008, pp.12-3), that ‘if people do not recognise the fairness of paying back what they’ve borrowed, then no one would lend anything to anyone, there being no expectation of a return.’[[137]](#footnote-158) While, on the surface, Atwood’s idea implies a bilateral debt relationship, it actually does not preclude that the return be made to a third party. Trust in the system of debt can still be maintained under these conditions, as the giver/creditor might observe that he has previously benefited from a similar return, and therefore trust that he might someday likewise benefit from some third party return in the future as well. Properly recognising this possibility of debt’s being repaid horizontally – that is, when the creditor receives what he is due from some source other than his debtor – might aid our understanding of specific examples of social behaviour, which we shall encounter shortly.[[138]](#footnote-159) Additionally, it ought to further diminish any purely materialistic understanding of the definition of debt, the much maligned reduction of all human interaction to a series of mercenary exchanges, as it emphasises instead debt’s link to Kropotkin’s idea of mutual aid, in which both animals and humans come to the aid of others with no direct expectation of a return but, rather, in the assumption that others will, at some point in the future, pay it on, and likewise come to their aid.[[139]](#footnote-160) In other words, the concept of horizontal repayments adds yet another layer to mutual indebtedness inherent to relationships of human association, and further strengthens the bonds which hold society together.

**4.2. Comprehending Justice and Debt through Aristotle’s Theory of Friendship**

In order to advantageously understand Aristotle’s theory of justice, the correct application of which is so pivotal to the binding of society together, full appreciation of the social equality and inequality of participants in communal exchange is necessary. In order to achieve this appreciation, Aristotle additionally provides a thorough classification of social relationships, known as his theory of friendship. All social relationships, and hence social debts, are treated by Aristotle under the rubric of types of friendship, with ‘friendship’ constituting an erroneous translation of the Greek word φιλία, which rather expresses the mutual draw between two humans – the attraction (not limited by mere affection), which pulls two individuals together.[[140]](#footnote-161) Differentiating between equal and unequal friendships, as well as friendships of virtue, pleasure and utility, this theory serves as an aid to comprehend the complexities of inter-personal relationships which guide and affect not only what might be deemed just behaviour between individuals, but also, who might be deemed a fitting person with whom to enter a relationship of debt and/or what return might likewise be considered fitting.

**4.2.1. Conditions Which Promote Friendship**

The primary prerequisite for friendship is simple: Aristotle specifies that friendship is fundamentally possible between all human beings, and therefore, much like justice, it is essentially founded on interaction with another person.[[141]](#footnote-162) Further, in order for it to constitute a friendship (rather than an enmity), he stipulates three additional necessary conditions: that, (a) each participant wishes good for the other, (b) each are also aware of this goodwill, and (c) the cause of their goodwill is the others’ inherent goodness, pleasantness, or usefulness.[[142]](#footnote-163) Points (a) and (b) refer to mutual affection, without which there would follow either no interaction, and therefore no friendship, or the sort of interaction, tinged with animosity, from which no unity or cooperation can develop. Point (c) is different, however: it indicates the three motivations for friendship. These motivations, either singly or in combination, are what draw people to each other. While friendship based on virtue is deemed to be the height of human relations, Aristotle deems that based on pleasure less praiseworthy, with that based on utility being least worthy of all.[[143]](#footnote-164) While we will explore shortly the three main motivations for people to converge in friendship identified by Aristotle, namely virtue, pleasure and utility,[[144]](#footnote-165) these motivations stand in second place to the mutuality of the relationship when it comes to friendship’s function in society. Without mutuality, the individuals remain as isolated as in the socially-desolate original state theorised in the Social Contract theory.

**4.2.2. Conditions Which Prevent Friendship**

Friendship is only impossible in the most extreme cases of inequality, such as between a king and a beggar, or a god and a mortal, because of their lack of mutuality.[[145]](#footnote-166) This condition, too, rests on ideas drawn from the theory of justice, for, as in Aristotle’s example, a prince can confer many benefits to a beggar, but there is very little a beggar can offer in return which could merit the value received and, similarly, not even the Greeks valued mankind’s worth highly enough to think that the honour which they offered to the gods could ever pay back, in either quality or quantity, the seeming benefits which the gods conferred on them. Without this to-and-fro interaction – that is, if there is no exchange of comparable assets between the two parties – friendship is deemed unrealisable.

**4.2.3. Friendship Among Equals**

Between people who are equal in status, ability, etc., and who come in contact with one another, mutuality is a given, and the social pull of attraction consists in a rather simple calculation of exchange. The deeds or function of this friendship’ (ἔργον φιλίας),[[146]](#footnote-167) entails each party acting on their duty to offer and return similar levels of material and social benefits. Indeed, ideally, and in order to make the friendship long-lasting, not only should the exchange be equal in quantity, but the benefits should also derive from the same source, such as mutual pleasure in each other’s company, or mutual support in matters of politics.[[147]](#footnote-168)

**4.2.4. Friendship Among Those Who Are Unequal**

The calculation of exchange becomes more complex, and more susceptible to miscalculations – as we have noticed – when the people involved are unequal in status, ability, and so on; and yet, these are the most common forms of friendship. In their most simple form, they include the relationships between parents and children, citizen and foreigner, rich and poor, old and young, and also, in what highlights some essential differences to modern, western society, between master and slave, and men and women also. Indeed, Aristotle cites the superiority of men over women as a prime example of friendship of inequality.[[148]](#footnote-169) On another level however, because no two people are exactly equal in every way,[[149]](#footnote-170) elements of a friendship of inequality exist even among those who primarily conduct a friendship of equality, which thus draws nearly every relationship into the sphere of friendship of inequality.

**4.2.4.1. Obligation**

The exchange involved in such friendships of inequality consists of acts of support and mutual benevolence which are often labelled obligations by ethical thinkers.[[150]](#footnote-171) Zelnick-Abramovitz illustrates this aspect of obligation more firmly by likening friendship of inequality to the cycle of give-and-take which occurs between a debtor and creditor:

relations between non-equals become vertical and assume a patron-client form. But because the repayment may not be of an equal value and any return reverses the situation and makes the former giver a debtor, this cycle of give-and-take has chasms of imbalance and inequality that may not always be overcome by equal return.[[151]](#footnote-172)

Unlike in matters of financial obligation, however, the obligations involved in unequal relationships differ greatly in their proportional magnitude – far more than the asymmetry injected by interest payments on a loan. The relationship is always formed by a superior and an inferior party – e.g., by a father (superior) and son (inferior) – and we are told that, ‘each of these persons has a different excellence and function, and also different motives for their regard, and so the affection and friendship they feel are different.’[[152]](#footnote-173) This difference in motivation translates into differences in the quality and quantity of the benefits offered. For example, the inferior party, because the support which he receives from the superior party is of greater worth, generates equality by returning greater levels of loyalty or honour. Likewise, as the services which the inferior can provide are inferior in worth, the superior only owes him an inferior level of return.[[153]](#footnote-174) Carrying out one’s social obligations with these differences in mind, both parties adjust their expectations in proportion with (ἀνάλογον) with what they deserve, or with their value (κατ’ ἀξίαν). Accordingly, we are told that ‘children render to the parents the services due (ᾂ δεῖ) to the authors of one’s being, and the parents to the children those due to one’s offspring.’[[154]](#footnote-175) Note how Aristotle uses the word δεῖ to express his point – a word identified as denoting obligation and debt.[[155]](#footnote-176) When each party following through with their obligations, in due proportion to the status of the other, the result is a sense of equality which emerges between individuals who were (and fundamentally still are) unequal.[[156]](#footnote-177) From this process of equalisation originates the same unity and concord as found in true friendships of equality.[[157]](#footnote-178)

**4.2.4.2. Mutuality**

In considering a friendship of inequality one might imagine a one-way flow of benevolence from the superior to the inferior party, however, Aristotle’s statement that ‘when one party rules and another is ruled, there is a function (ἒργον) performed between them,’[[158]](#footnote-179) belies his view that rulers and subjects are not separated into active and passive roles, but rather that each have a function to perform for the other and, as such, might be said to be both simultaneously active and passive. This stance is contrary to the ruling-ruled relationship which exists within political justice (between equals), in which each take turns at (actively) ruling and (passively) being ruled (a passivity which, as Inamura points out, seems contrary to Aristotle’s basic understanding that human happiness lies in activity, and not in passivity).[[159]](#footnote-180) Aristotle’s treatment of friendships of inequality, however, as Sousa points out in response to Inamura, focusses more on the mutual relationship than on the pursuit of virtue.[[160]](#footnote-181) This mutuality is what causes each party to seek the other out, not only to give them their due, but also to initiate the next phase of interaction, in the manner explored in the previous discussions on *charis* and guest-friendship,[[161]](#footnote-182) by which means they further strengthen the bonds of their friendship. The difference between the ruler and the ruled lies, therefore, not in the one being active and the other passive, but rather in characteristics of their activity: identified by Inamura as being (for the ruler) virtue ‘in accord with correct reason (κατὰ τὸν ὀρθὸν λόγον)’ and (for the ruled) virtue ‘with correct reason (μετὰ τοῦ ὀρθοῦ λόγου):’ the former making use of his own faculty for reason, and the latter following the instruction of the ruler, thereby acting in accordance with the ruler’s reason. [[162]](#footnote-183)

**4.2.5. Mixed Friendship**

A similar continuity of the relationship to that which is possible in both equal and unequal friendships is scarcely achievable in so-called ‘mixed friendship,’ in which the benefits shared are either different in kind, such as pleasure exchanged for gain, or derived from different sources, such as pleasure in the other’s company in return for pleasure in appearances, or loyalty in politics in return for financial support.[[163]](#footnote-184) These heterogeneous friendships, which fit neither into the description of equal or unequal friendship,[[164]](#footnote-185) nor into Aristotle’s outline of the three forms of friendship, are described as ‘less intense and less lasting,’[[165]](#footnote-186) and produce complaint and dissatisfaction, e.g., between lovers, because, unlike in monetary exchange, there is no common measure to value what each offers.[[166]](#footnote-187) This lack of comparability leads to strife as the parties to the friendship soon perceive that the other is not offering all of the benefits that had been promised.[[167]](#footnote-188) Aristotle does not expound the exact process between this disappointment in seemingly unfulfilled promises and the strife that breaks up the friendship, but we know from Xenophon that broken promises result in a loss of trust,[[168]](#footnote-189) and from Aristotle, quoting Lycophron, that an agreement (συνθήκη) is a ‘guarantee of men’s just claims on one another,’ which therefore means that a broken agreement brings about the negative consequences of injustice.[[169]](#footnote-190) The example given by Aristotle of the potentially detrimental consequences of a mixed friendship is that of a man who hires a harpist, promising him pay for the pleasure of his music; who, however, the next day cheats the harpist by saying that ‘he had already paid for the pleasure by the pleasure he had given,’ which is, the pleasure of anticipating the pay.[[170]](#footnote-191) Aristotle comments that this answer would have been reasonable if the agreement had been to exchange pleasure for pleasure; but as it should have been an exchange of pleasure for pay, it was not the right course of action (οὐκ ἂν εἴη τὰ κατὰ τὴν κοινωνίαν καλῶς). The example of the harpist demonstrates an explicit and voluntary breach of trust, which is rather the most extreme sort of behaviour; Aristotle’s prior example of crossed wires over the expectations of lovers exhibits the same result of an eventual dissolution of the friendship, though from less clear-cut and immediate a cause.

**4.2.6 Friendship of Virtue**

Having a shared motivation for the friendship is therefore of great importance to the continuation of the relationship, whereas having a shared level of equality is not. Returning, then, to the three basic forms of friendship, we find that it is friendship of virtue which resembles friendship in the modern sense of the word, as it involves people who enjoy each other’s company and have common tastes, who seek each other out, and feel true affection and care for each other’s well-being.[[171]](#footnote-192) Aristotle identifies friendship of virtue as the most fully realised example of a friendship of equality,[[172]](#footnote-193) though all three motivations for friendship might produce friendships of both equality and inequality.[[173]](#footnote-194) As this companionship is extremely fulfilling, such friends like to pursue those activities which bring them pleasure, e.g., drinking, dicing, playing sports or philosophising, in each other’s company.[[174]](#footnote-195) Spending a lot of time together is a characteristic of a friendship of virtue, as ‘you cannot know a man until you have consumed the proverbial amount of salt in his company,’ and indeed, this extends over the course of a life-time, as such friendships last the longest.[[175]](#footnote-196) The intimacy developed by this companionship means that there exists a heightened level of trust and confidence between the friends, culminating in a perception of one’s friend as ‘another self,’ which Stern-Gillet calls psychic symbiosis, where friends can ‘transcend the limitations later associated with bodily separateness and individual self-awareness.’[[176]](#footnote-197) Friendship of virtue is therefore valuable both as a forum to use one’s virtues for the benefit of another, and as a means to assess and improve oneself, because a person cannot accurately perceive his own vices and virtues, though he might when they are reflected in a friend who is another self.[[177]](#footnote-198) Aristotle’s virtue-friend, through maintaining this externalised perspective, is provided with the means to attain increased self-awareness.

**4.2.6.1. Obligations in a Friendship of Virtue**

Making an equivalent return is an inherent part of a friendship of virtue, with Aristotle stating that ‘one ought not make a man one’s friend if one is unwilling to return his favours.’[[178]](#footnote-199) This indicates the central role played by debt in such friendships, as the need to make such ‘returns’ (ἀνταποδοτέον) belies a state of indebtedness. Stern-Gillet also observes this factor, expressed by her repeatedly using the term ‘obligations’ in her analysis of social benefits generated by friendships of virtue.[[179]](#footnote-200) When Aristotle identifies the returns which friends of virtue are obliged to make, he is therefore relaying the many social debts inherent to the friendship. He says that the primary benefit which ought to be returned is affection, and specifies that affection for the virtue of the friend, rather than for the gain which may be extracted from them in turn, is the key feature of friendship of virtue.[[180]](#footnote-201) A further benefit owed between friends of virtue is the willingness to share their possessions freely with each other,[[181]](#footnote-202) with Aristotle approvingly citing a Pythagorean proverb which states that ‘friends’ goods are common property’ (κοινὰ τὰ φίλων), and then compounding the importance of such communality, or sharing within friendship by stating that ‘community is the essence of friendship’ (ἐν κοινωνίᾳ γὰρ ἡ φιλία).[[182]](#footnote-203) Indeed, it is the conscious act of sharing one’s possessions that Aristotle views to be virtuous, reflecting his general view that in friendship an active role is better than a passive one (φίλου μᾶλλον ἐστι τὸ εὖ ποιεῖν ἢ πάσχειν).[[183]](#footnote-204) Because it is only possible to actively share one’s possessions with a friend if the possessions are not owned in common to begin with, this constitutes a reason for his supporting private property.[[184]](#footnote-205) The obligation to share possessions between friends is even extended to money (the moral obligation is indicated by the grammatical form βοηθητέον),[[185]](#footnote-206) and those who fail to assist their friends with money are subsequently accused of displaying a vice.[[186]](#footnote-207) Indeed, the duty to support one’s friend financially also includes a willingness to forego money oneself if, by doing so, one’s friends might gain more money; fulfilling this duty does not denote a loss, however, as we are told that he who thus supports a friend (as a social creditor, if you will) through such financial relinquishment receives in return an even greater reward, which is nobility (τὸ καλόν).[[187]](#footnote-208) Nobility is again mentioned in the line, ‘one ought to pay back a loan (δάνειον ᾧ ὀφείλει ἀποδοτέον), but if the balance of nobility or urgency is on the side of employing the money for a gift, then one ought to decide in favour of the gift,’[[188]](#footnote-209) which, firstly, showcases a certain propensity in Aristotle to juxtapose social and financial debts at moments of moral exhortation, and which, secondly, reveals that Aristotle deems moral debt within friendship of virtue to be more pressing than financial debt, though financial debts are treated as important in their own right (all else being equal), both here and in his discussions on corrective justice and friendship of utility.

**4.2.6.2. Nobility in Friendship**

The reward of nobility (τὸ καλόν), which Aristotle mentions in the lines just cited, is a powerful motivating factor in tending to one’s obligations, and constitutes, alongside the awareness of the future receipt of returned benevolence, an additional return derived from the act of fulfilling one’s obligations. He calls nobility ‘the greater good’ (τὸ μεῖζον ἀγαθὸν)[[189]](#footnote-210) and, though one might assume that nobility, like honour, is a benefit assigned to one by the community, Aristotle says that a man who fulfils his obligations to his friend assigns nobility to himself. This means that, like the virtues, nobility comes from the actions of the individual himself, though of course, it is only achievable through interactions with others within the community and *polis*.[[190]](#footnote-211) Aristotle repeatedly emphasises the close connection between nobility and friendship of virtue, and asserts the pre-eminence of nobility over the other benefits of life when he says that a virtuous man would surrender ‘wealth and power and all the goods that men struggle to win,’ including life itself, in the knowledge that it will bring him nobility and would service a friend or fellow citizen.[[191]](#footnote-212) Nobility is therefore a large return, and a return which a giver/creditor receives from the act of giving, rather than from the friend who receives the benefit. The question is whether this return constitutes a repayment of the debt owed by the friend/debtor, or does it rather constitute an additional bonus for the friend/creditor, along the lines of interest earned. Seen as a bonus, such nobility would likely serve as a motivation to continue to give, whereas, particularly in unequal friendships, if nobility is tantamount to a repayment of the debt, it would serve to reduce the debt owed by an inferior receiver to his superior giver.

**4.2.6.3. Further Behaviours Owed to One’s Friends**

In addition to the affection and willingness to share possessions which friends of virtue owe one another, Aristotle speaks of further types of behaviour which are owed to a friend. These include many habits which further communication between the friends, such as paying heed to what the other says,[[192]](#footnote-213) frankness of speech,[[193]](#footnote-214) and the companionship which comes from conversing and communicating one’s thoughts to the other.[[194]](#footnote-215) Additionally, in friendships built up over the course of many years, loyalty and confidence become mutually owed, and serves as a form of protection against the slander and suspicion which often pervades the other, inferior, friendships of pleasure and utility, in which loyalty and confidence are lacking: ‘for a man is slow to believe anybody’s word about a friend whom he has himself tried and tested for many years, and with whom there is the mutual confidence, [and] the incapacity ever to do each other wrong.’[[195]](#footnote-216) When it comes to the appropriate etiquette of friendship of virtue, Aristotle notes that people should only summon a friend to their aid when to do so would help them greatly and cause him very little trouble, which shows the obligation for the receiver of a friend’s aid to practice restraint and consideration. On the other hand, friends also owe it to each other to show generosity, and are exhorted by Aristotle to go ‘uninvited and readily to those in misfortune.’[[196]](#footnote-217) It is a friend’s duty to render service without being asked (that is, to be the initiator),[[197]](#footnote-218) though the complex nuances of this etiquette among friends also demands that one should not seem too eager to visit by going uninvited or too often, if the motivation for a visit is to enjoy the friend’s good things: to do so is not noble, we are told.[[198]](#footnote-219) By following Aristotle’s advice on what activity and behaviour is owed within friendship of virtue, friends of virtue should find that the bonds of their association are strengthened, and their friendship will be fulfilling and long-lasting – thus embodying the ideal type against which all other forms of social relationship are measured.

**4.2.6.4. Neglect of Obligations**

If, on the other hand, the obligations within a friendship of virtue are ignored or neglected, e.g., if a man deceives his friend, and thus denies him the loyalty which he owes, then Aristotle deems him to be ‘a worse malefactor than those who counterfeit coinage (τὸ νόμισμα κιβδηλεύσιν).’[[199]](#footnote-220) He is similarly scathing towards those who repudiate their obligation to surrender advantage for the sake of a friend, saying that he who ‘ruins his dearest friends for the sake of a farthing, and similarly in matters of the intellect also, is as senseless and mistaken as a child or lunatic.’[[200]](#footnote-221) Indeed, he deems fierce anger to be the reasonable response for a person who is wronged/treated unjustly (ἀδικεῖσθαι)[[201]](#footnote-222) by a friend because, on top of the harm that is done to them, ‘they are also being defrauded of a benefit by persons whom they believe to owe them one (ὀφείλεσθαι τὴν εὐργεσίαν).’[[202]](#footnote-223) Note the direct debt-terminology of ὀφείλεσθαι in describing this friendship of virtue. Note too how this line recalls Aristotle’s discussion on fraud within voluntary corrective justice, in which we initially found that Aristotle conceives of such behaviour in terms of justice and injustice.[[203]](#footnote-224) It describes how the injury to a friend is two-fold, as the friend not only suffers the original harm, which, when Aristotle’s evaluation of corrective justice is applied to it, needs to be corrected according to the arithmetic calculation of proportional justice, but the additional factor of their relationship as friends adds a further injury, because the debts of loyalty, support and other benefits are unpaid. This additional harm must be rectified according to the geometric calculation of proportional justice, which factors their friendship into the reckoning. The doubling of both the injury and the return explains Aristotle’s reference, in the *Politics*,to the tragic line, ‘They that too deeply loved too deeply hate,’[[204]](#footnote-225) and demonstrates how neglecting one’s obligations, even within a friendship of virtue, leads to the rupture of the bonds of their affection, the swift termination of their association, along with the sort of bad feeling which can lead to *stasis.* The social conflict caused by neglecting one’s obligations is also the reason why bad people cannot have friends, ‘since they try to get more than their share of advantages, and take less than their share of labours and public burdens... The result is *stasis*, everybody trying to make others do their duty but refusing to do it themselves.’[[205]](#footnote-226)

**4.2.7. Lesser Friendships**

The other two motivations for friendship, pleasure and utility, as mentioned, are deemed to be of less worth, when measured against friendship of virtue. Indeed, Aristotle is actually reluctant to call them ‘friendships’ at all, taking pains to mention that he uses the word because the men of his day use the term ‘friends’ to describe such people.[[206]](#footnote-227) While he ultimately adopts the terminology of friendship for these lesser associations, he specifies that they are only analogous to friendship, and do not constitute true friendship because, while they resemble true friendships in their structures and goals, they nonetheless differ substantially in their motivation and duration.[[207]](#footnote-228) These friendships are formed by accident between people who happen to meet locally (οἰκείως ἐντυγχάνοντες),[[208]](#footnote-229) unlike friendship of virtue, in which the friends seek the other out, and devote time and consideration to the friendship.[[209]](#footnote-230) Furthermore, as they are based on mutual gain rather than goodwill, they founder at the very first condition of friendship, that each participant wishes good for the other.[[210]](#footnote-231) These friendships are often cut short because they exist only as a means to an end, and once that end is fulfilled, the friendship is tossed aside.[[211]](#footnote-232)

**4.2.7.1. Friendship of Utility: Making a Return**

Friendship of utility is the second analogous friendship and, as mentioned, it is the least similar to friendship of virtue. Before examining the likely participants and motivations of such friendship, let us first note that the main debt owed within a friendship of utility is to make an equivalent return.[[212]](#footnote-233) Aristotle says that ‘one ought, if one can, to return the equivalent of services received (ἀνταποδοτέον), and to do so willingly,’ and adds that those who are unwilling to make this return should simply not make friends (οὐ ποιητέον).[[213]](#footnote-234) The equivalent return is calculated, as identified in the description of equal and unequal friendships, according to proportionate justice, based on desert.[[214]](#footnote-235) Pakaluk comments that the reason for making the return in this way is that it preserves an element of friendliness, which is accordance with the ideal function of justice – as of its analogue, debt – which is to bind society together.[[215]](#footnote-236) As in all associations, the act of making an equivalent return is what sustains the friendship. Making a return within a friendship of utility is prioritised by Aristotle ahead of fulfilling one’s obligations to other types of friends, demonstrated by the line, ‘one ought to return services rendered (ἀνταποδοτέον) rather than do favours to one’s comrades (ἑταίροις), just as one ought to pay back a loan to a creditor (δάνειον ᾧ ὀφείλει ἀποδοτέον) rather than give the money to a friend.’[[216]](#footnote-237) Notice once again Aristotle’s practice of making an analogy between social and financial forms of debt: friendship is likened at critical moments like this to the debtor / creditor relationship. In this instance, the prioritisation of making a return to a utility friend no doubt stems from there existing only a minimal element of affection in this form of friendship, meaning that friends of utility are less likely to forgive delays. Indeed, we are told that most or all discontent and dispute finds its source in friendship of utility.[[217]](#footnote-238)

**4.2.7.2. Juggling Conflicting Social Debts**

Aristotle subsequently refines his stance on the prioritisation of friendships, however, saying that ‘if the balance of nobility or urgency’ favours benefiting a virtue-friend, then this obligation trumps the obligation to a utility-friend, presumably because of the higher value, and longer duration of the more meaningful friendship compared to the inferiority and short-term friendship of utility,[[218]](#footnote-239) and he thereby draws attention to the difficulty involved in juggling the various debts inherent to the various forms of friendship which make up the totality of a person’s social existence. Aristotle additionally advises that, while one should not be without friends of utility, at the same time one should not have too many, ‘for it is troublesome to have to repay the services of a large number of people, and life is not long enough for one to do it,’ and furthermore, because too many would be both superfluous and a hindrance to living well.[[219]](#footnote-240) This practical advice not only reinforces the obligation to pay back all services received in friendship of utility, but it also displays Aristotle’s desire for restraint, as restraint is natural, whereas unlimited excess is unnatural; considering that friendship of utility is often dogged by greed (πλεονεξία), Aristotle no doubt believes this advice to be particularly pertinent to it.[[220]](#footnote-241)

**4.2.7.3. Participants and Goals**

Bearing in mind that making a return is the central obligation in friendship of utility, let us now turn to its typical participants and goals. Aristotle deems it the relationship of choice for the elderly, a statement which he reasons by saying that old men ‘do not pursue pleasure but profit.’[[221]](#footnote-242) Reserving judgement on the merits of this statement with regard to old men and their pleasures, it is of note that profit (ἡ ὠφέλεια) is the stated goal of this form of relationship. In fact, profit and gain (το συμφέρον) both are the primary motivators of friendship of utility, much as they are the primary motivators of relationships of financial debt, and Aristotle includes all people ‘who chase after gain’ as further likely participants.[[222]](#footnote-243) Furthermore, friendship of utility ‘seems most frequently to spring from opposites (ἐξ ἐναντίων), for instance in a friendship between a poor man and a rich one, or between an ignorant man and a learned; for a person desiring something which he happens to lack will give something else in return for it (ἀντιδωρεῖται).’[[223]](#footnote-244) Taken literally, this line places utility friendships beyond the realm of even unequal friendships, as complete opposites can have nothing in common and are therefore as incapable of friendship as a prince and a beggar or a god and a man, as we discovered earlier.[[224]](#footnote-245) This literal interpretation explains Aristotle’s declaration that the rich and well-positioned in society ‘have no need of useful friends,’[[225]](#footnote-246) which, though unlikely to be true on a social level, or in friendship of virtue, is nonetheless correct if ‘ὁι χρήσιμοι’ (useful friends) refers to those who are financially useful, deriving its financial meaning from the distinctly financial term χρῆμα. The same is true for the supremely happy man also, ‘as he is supplied with good things already,’ and therefore has no further needs to be fulfilled by such utilitarian interactions.[[226]](#footnote-247) Aristotle does not restrict himself to the literal sense of ‘opposites,’ however, as he clearly states that there is friendship between these opposite types of people, and that they lack something which the other can provide, which therefore indicates that these most frequent of friendships of utility are simple unequal friendships.[[227]](#footnote-248)

**4.2.7.4. Vulgarity and the Marketplace**

While Aristotle does mention non-financially motivated friendships of utility, it becomes obvious that financial gain is its primary motivation. Urmson compares participants in friendship of utility to people whom we might nowadays call business partners – a term which implies a certain equality of status. On a certain level Aristotle, too, equalises the participants in friendship of utility, with disparaging comments which tar them all with the same brush, e.g., calling them all ἀγοραῖοι, which connotes ‘lowly and vulgar.’ Any inequality within the friendship is thereby reduced to the quality and quantity of the benefits exchanged, rather than status, because friends of utility all share an equal ignobility of status.[[228]](#footnote-249) The primary meaning of the word ἀγοραῖον is ‘pertaining to the market place,’[[229]](#footnote-250) which again situates this friendship where some people aim to make financial profit, while others try to gain advantage in the form of goods. The negative shade to the word, however, may bely a belief that the market-place and the petty commercial transactions associated with it are vulgar and distasteful.[[230]](#footnote-251) The Greek marketplace was generally considered a vulgar institution, with, e.g., Dikaiopolis decrying its coarseness in the opening scene of Aristophanes’ *Acharnians*, and its reputation for haggling and double-dealing and down-right cheating, according to Herodotus, was already widespread in the time of Cyrus.[[231]](#footnote-252)

**4.2.7.5. Marketplace Cheating and *Pleonexia***

Aristotle provides a rather in-depth analysis of the causes of such cheating in market-place relationships like those of friendship of utility, essentially saying that they all originate in greed (πλεονεξία), which is the main cause of many destructive behaviours, including the violation of distributive justice and the production of civil strife.[[232]](#footnote-253) He says that greed is caused by the moral weakness of mankind – the disjunction between the ideal of how people wish to act and the reality of how they actually act. As friends of utility associate with each other for profit they each always want more, and Aristotle observes that all, or most men chase what is profitable despite wishing for what is noble.[[233]](#footnote-254) Because, as Young tells us, πλεονεξία is not simply the wish to have more rather than less, but also includes the excessive desire for more than one’s fair share, the market abounds with the feelings of grievance felt by those who, because others receive more than their share, themselves unavoidably receive less than their share.[[234]](#footnote-255) These people find themselves in a state of unjust inequality (analogous to debt of the most destructive kind) which they feel they do not deserve, as it is both involuntary and contravenes particular justice, and which invariably leads to the kind of complaint and discord which gives both the marketplace and financial debt their bad reputations.[[235]](#footnote-256)

**4.2.7.6. Censure of Usurers**

Aristotle criticises those who act out their greed on a grand scale for being wicked (πονηροὺς) and unjust (ἀδίκους),[[236]](#footnote-257) which is somewhat less harsh than what he charges those who act out their greed on a small scale, as these he additionally labels ‘mean’ (ἀνελευθέρους), due to both the low level of profit which they receive, and their incessant pursuit of greed despite the reproach they receive.[[237]](#footnote-258) The examples which Aristotle provides of those who follow such ‘mean trades’ notably include petty usurers (τοκισταὶ κατὰ μικρὰ), whom he lists alongside brothel-keepers and thieves.[[238]](#footnote-259) Millett asserts that Aristotle’s disparagement of usury in this passage is indicative of an opinion that was ‘outmoded’ and ‘badly out of touch with reality,’ however, he offers no more than an opinion by Grote in support of this assertion.[[239]](#footnote-260) Indeed, the idea that such disparagement of usury was anything but commonplace and very much *en mode* is contradicted by Millett’s own argument, later in the same book, which demonstrates the abundance of negative depictions of usurers in popular writing spanning the time before, during and after Aristotle’s time, citing Aristophanes’ *The Clouds*, Antiphanes’ *Neottis*,Diogenes Laertius’ depiction of Menippus,Nicostratus’ *Tokistes*, andAlexis’ *Tokistes Katapseudomenos (The Lying Usurer) –* though the latter two are no longer extant, the title of the last is unambiguous in its negativity.[[240]](#footnote-261) The wealth of literary evidence related to usury strongly indicates widespread use of the services provided by usurers, a point corroborated by Finley,[[241]](#footnote-262) and confirmed by Aristotle’s categorisation of money-lending as the second largest branch of commerce – a confirmation which I argue is indeed in keeping with the common view.[[242]](#footnote-263) The popularity of the services provided by usurers, does not, however, preclude the unpopularity of the usurers themselves, regarding which Aristotle goes so far as to describe them as ‘hated men.’[[243]](#footnote-264)

**4.2.7.6.1. Contrasting Reasons for Their Dislike**

If Aristotle’s viewpoint does diverge from popular opinion, the basis of the divergence lies in the proposed reasons for their disfavour. The example of Strepsiades in *The Clouds* shows that hatred for usurers might be founded upon a debtor’s sense of unfairness at being caught in a situation with no way out, alongside the simultaneous realisation that usurers make their profit from this helplessness; all of which is greatly compounded by the fear of the consequences of not being able to repay one’s debts.[[244]](#footnote-265) The explanation provided by Aristotle for his dislike of usury, however, is founded on the more high-minded idea that usury is contrary to nature. This, he explains, is due to usurers utilising money in a way contrary to its original design, namely, instead of using money for exchange, it is used to ‘give birth to’ more money, creating limitless offspring (τὰ τικτόμενα). It is likely that he uses the word τοκισταὶ in this account of usury, rather than the usual word for a petty usurer, ὀβολοστάτης, with the purpose of emphasising this point.[[245]](#footnote-266)

**4.2.7.7. Liberality and Friendliness in Financial Debt Transactions**

One type of debt which Aristotle refers to as explicitly belonging within the framework of friendship of utility, consists of the potential delay of payment within a normal financial transaction. Such an extension of the period of time between receiving goods or services and paying for them in return shows how debt, unlike exchange on the spot, plays a role in extending the duration of friendship of utility.Thus prolonging the duration of a friendship is a common function of debt, as we discovered previously.[[246]](#footnote-267) Aristotle explains the situation thus:

Such a connection when on stated terms is one of the legal type, whether it be a purely business matter of exchange on the spot, or a more liberal accommodation for future repayment, though still with an agreement as to the *quid pro quo*; and in the latter case the obligation (τὸ ὀφείλημα) is clear and cannot cause dispute, though there is an element of friendliness in the delay allowed...[[247]](#footnote-268)

Here Aristotle draws attention to the two options of making either an immediate, or a delayed payment. He also clarifies that all such financial interactions are legally enforced, in contrast to the social enforcement that often accompanies social debts; although, this boundary between what is legal and what is social did not exist to the same degree in Greece as it does today because, as Dover relates, the citizens of a *polis* were the direct source of their laws, and the moral standing of the citizens had a greater impact on legal decisions as a result.[[248]](#footnote-269) Such intermingling of social and legal matters is evident in the above passage also, as Aristotle states that those business interactions which create a debt relationship (an ‘accommodation for future repayment’) are both ‘more liberal’ (ἐλευθεριωτέρα) and also ‘bear an element of friendliness (φιλικὸν),’[[249]](#footnote-270) phrases which bely a more positive refinement of Aristotle’s estimation of friendship of utility, which is otherwise described in such negative terms as being vulgar, motivated by greed, and causing slander and suspicion in the community.[[250]](#footnote-271) For Aristotle, liberality is a commendable term which refers to a virtuous man, ‘perhaps the most beloved’ of all virtuous people, who is concerned with giving rather than receiving and, in particular, with giving money to the right recipients and with the motivation of nobility. Likewise, the term ‘friendliness’ bears associations of mutual confidence, trust, willingness to share one’s possessions and, most pertinently, affection for the virtue of the other instead of for the gain that may be extracted from them.[[251]](#footnote-272) Elements of liberality and friendliness, Aristotle recognises, can elevate friendships of utility from something base and *agoraion* to a relationship that is more positive and akin to true “friendship,” once the delayed repayment inherent to debt is included in the exchange. Such allowance for a modicum of ‘friendliness’ between friends of utility is lost by the time Adam Smith says that ‘[i]t is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own self-interest. We address ourselves not to their humanity but to their self-love...,’[[252]](#footnote-273) which is a world-view that precludes benevolence of any kind in matters of business.

**4.2.7.8. A Parallel to Friendship?**

In a later passage, forming part of a discussion on the nuances of the benefactor- beneficiary relationship within friendship, Aristotle once again introduces a parallel example from the field of financial debt, which describes a further praise-worthy element within what is doubtlessly, though not specified by Aristotle, a friendship of utility. He writes,

The view most generally taken is that it is because the one party is in the position of a debtor and the other of a creditor (οἱ μὲν ὀφείλουσι, τοῖς δὲ ὀφείλεται); just as therefore in the case of a loan, whereas the borrower would be glad to have his creditor out of the way, the lender actually watches over his debtor’s safety, so it is thought that the conferrer of a benefit wishes the recipient to live in order that he may receive a return, but the recipient is not particularly anxious to make a return.[[253]](#footnote-274)

In the situation described, the creditor feels a sort of debt of care to his debtor in an attempt to lower the risk of non-remittance, such as might happen were something unfavourable to afflict the debtor.[[254]](#footnote-275) While the motivation of this care is self-serving, and the cynicism of the creditor’s motivation does not escape Aristotle’s notice,[[255]](#footnote-276) the element of care itself is nonetheless commendable. The debtor, on the other hand, displays no such friendliness, which Aristotle admits is ‘not untrue to human nature,’ citing both the short memories of most men, and their tendency to prefer to receive benefits than to give them for this lack of affection.[[256]](#footnote-277) Indeed, as true affection (for the person, rather than for the return of one’s outlay) is lacking on both sides of the relationship in this example, Aristotle finally comes down on the side of rejecting his initial perception that this financial debt relationship might serve as an outright parallel to friendship.[[257]](#footnote-278) However, it nonetheless remains that the certain element of friendliness or affection which such debt transactions demonstrate displayed enough evidence of similarity to true friendship, for him to consider the matter most carefully.

**4.3. Survey of Social Debts: The Household**

It is now time to look more closely at some of the examples which inspired this aspect of Aristotle’s theory, beginning with the relationships found within the household. The household was an entity of great importance to Greek society, in part due to its forming the primary building-block of the state, the original source of food production, moral and social education, security, and other practical necessities of life,[[258]](#footnote-279) but also, significantly, due to its constituting a microcosm, or a primary source of the relationships and interactions which arise in society at large.[[259]](#footnote-280) AsAristotle pronounces in the *Eudemian Ethics,* ‘in the household are first found the origins and springs of friendship, of political organization, and justice (ἐν οἰκίᾳ πρῶτον ἀρχαὶ καὶ πηγαὶ φιλίας καὶ πολιτείας καὶ δικαίου).’[[260]](#footnote-281) This view does not amount to an anomaly within Ancient Greece, as confirmed by Patterson, who deems this outline of the essential relationship of the household to the polis accurately reflects those built upon and taken for granted by the political institutions at Sparta, Gortyn and Athens.[[261]](#footnote-282) While the husband-wife relationship might be considered most important within a modern household, one could say that, in Greece, this honour might be more appropriately assigned to the relationship between parents and their children, reflecting the primacy given to the succession of the household, within ancient Greek society.[[262]](#footnote-283)

4.3.1. **Parents and Children: Inequality and Parental Obligation**

The parent-child relationship is inherently unequal, as it begins when one party is a mere newborn, and the other an adult in their prime. The weight of debt in such relationships is likewise unevenly shared, as, to quote Marchant’s translation of Xenophon, ‘...what deeper obligation can we find than that of children to their parents? To their parents children owe their being and their portion of all fair sights and all blessings that the gods bestow on men — gifts so highly prized by us that all will sacrifice anything rather than lose them.’[[263]](#footnote-284) While their children are young, the parents supply them with their bodily needs, love and security, and provide for their child’s future by reproving their errors, advising them,[[264]](#footnote-285) and enabling access to education or a profession.[[265]](#footnote-286) As long as a child has no power to protect or help itself, it will always need its father to help it,[[266]](#footnote-287) we are told, which is an obligation readily discharged, for ‘a father’s first care is for his children’s welfare.’[[267]](#footnote-288) It is for this reason that, ideally, fathers should be no older than fifty at the time of their child's birth,[[268]](#footnote-289) as otherwise, ‘elderly fathers get no good from their children’s return of their favours (ἡ χάρις), nor do children from the help they get from the fathers.’[[269]](#footnote-290) As it takes a number of years for the child to become cognisant of the benefits he receives, and possibly longer still until he realises that this benevolence spawns an obligation towards his benefactors, the parent-child relationship is marked by a distinct chronological split, and an initial one-sidedness which is difficult to compensate for.[[270]](#footnote-291)

**4.3.1.1. How Children Might Repay the Debt**

The child can begin paying back his parents for what Kristjánsson calls ‘the emotional and intellectual debt incurred,’ in little ways which typically mark the deference expected from younger generations towards their elders.[[271]](#footnote-292) We are told that children were to honour their parents[[272]](#footnote-293) and freely proffer service to them.[[273]](#footnote-294) They were to stand up when their parents enter, offer them a seat[[274]](#footnote-295) (or the most comfortable seat),[[275]](#footnote-296) and show them obedience, submission and forgiveness.[[276]](#footnote-297) Needless to say, directing coarse language, insults or violence towards one's parents was strongly condemned.[[277]](#footnote-298) While such basic deference was a constant duty within the parent-child relationship, the child's responsibility towards his parents increased in proportion with the parents' increase in age and infirmity. The superiority of the parental status accords them protection and support in the face of said physical deterioration. As such, children are bound to place all their means – their property, physical fitness, and intellect – at their parents' disposal, in order to give them the care and attendance which their circumstances require.[[278]](#footnote-299) The explanation for this is, in Plato's words (encountered previously)[[279]](#footnote-300):

It is meet and right that a debtor should discharge his first and greatest obligation and pay the debt which comes before all others; he must consider that all he has and holds belongs to those who bore and bred him, and he is meant to use it in their service to the limit of his powers. He must serve them first with his property, then with hand and brain, and so give to the old people what they desperately need in view of their age: repayment of all that anxious care and attention they lavished on him, the long-standing “loan” they made him as a child.[[280]](#footnote-301)

Indeed, according to Aristotle, this responsibility is to to be attended ahead of all others, even ahead of one's own self-preservation, since, ‘it would be thought that our parents have the first claim on us for maintenance, since we owe it to them as debtors (ὡς ὀφειλοντας).’[[281]](#footnote-302) And lastly, the duties owed one’s parents endure even when death separates them from their children, beginning with funeral rites,[[282]](#footnote-303) but continuing with unceasing veneration, as yearly rites are to be paid (repaid, in fact: ἀποδιδόναι), and a memorial in their honour constantly maintained.[[283]](#footnote-304) Xenophon corroborates this information, and adds that the state actually investigates whether or not this duty has been adequately fulfilled, when choosing men for office, in order to ensure that the men involved are worthy of representing the state.[[284]](#footnote-305)

**4.3.1.2. A Debt Which Cannot Be Settled**

All of these honours and services which dutiful children bestow on their parents are, however, doomed to fall short of full compensation for the enormity of the benefits which they have received. How can one repay the price of life itself? The parent-child relationship is primarily unequal because, ‘the father is the source of the child’s existence, which seems to be the greatest of all benefits,’[[285]](#footnote-306) which comes in addition to the nurture and education which the child receives. Added to these, the differences in age, experience, and (one hopes) wisdom, make even a simple return of the benefits received – a feat, perhaps, possible, if the child were to save its parents’ lives – insufficient to achieve equalisation (in terms of Aristotle’s general theory of justice). A proportional return, which takes into account these extremes of inequality, is what is needed. This means that, in order to truly achieve balance, the children must pay their parents a much greater return than that which they receive,[[286]](#footnote-307) which is a task understandably considered to be impossible, ‘for a debtor ought to pay what he owes, but nothing that a son can do comes up to the benefits he has received, so that a son is always in his father’s debt (ὀφείλοντα γὰρ ἀποδοτέον, οὐδὲν δὲ ποιήσας ἄξιον τῶν ὑπηργμένων δέδρακεν, ὥστ’ ἀεὶ ὀφείλει).’[[287]](#footnote-308) This being so, how might the debts and obligations within the parent-child relationship ever be equalised?

**4.3.1.3. Horizontal Repayment as an Equaliser of Debt: Case of the Estranged Mother**

The solution may lie in the concept of horizontal repayments of debt, discussed previously,[[288]](#footnote-309) by which means the creditor receives what he is due by some source other than the debtor. In finance it might be a third-party guarantor who thus, horizontally, settles a debt on behalf of a debtor, however the source of the recompense need neither be another person, nor even have any connection to the person of the debtor. The receipt of such repayments go a long way to settle the debt owed by the child to its parents,[[289]](#footnote-310) and Aristotle outlines the sources of such repayment. Firstly, he notes that the giver of a benefit receives a return from the act of giving itself.[[290]](#footnote-311) Though this phenomenon must occur from every act of giving, Aristotle illustrates his point with an indisputable example, that of a mother who puts her baby out to be nursed and reared by someone else. These mothers, he observes, continue to heap love on their children without asking to be loved in return. What might appear to be some spontaneous form of selfless altruism is explained, however, in terms of foregoing one’s due: ‘even though the children, not knowing them, cannot render them any part of what is due (προσήκει) to a mother.’[[291]](#footnote-312) This shows that the relationship is still being conceived in terms of receiving what one is owed, even when repayment from the debtor is eliminated as a factor.[[292]](#footnote-313)

**4.3.1.3.1. Horizontal Repayment and the Theory of ‘Trouble Cost’**

The immediate context of this passage suggests that the horizontal payment consists in having the relationship endure, alongside potentially receiving praise for her devotion to her child. A little later, however, Aristotle deepens his analysis of the phenomenon with the suggestion that, ‘everybody loves a thing more if it has cost him trouble.’[[293]](#footnote-314) This leads to what I suggest could be called his theory of ‘trouble cost’ (τὰ ἐπιπόνως γενόμενα). It posits that the sense of affection, accomplishment and worth felt by a person is directly proportionate to the amount of effort he or she has put in to an endeavour.[[294]](#footnote-315) As it takes no effort to receive a benefit (δοκεῖ δὲ τὸ μὲν εὖ πάσχειν ἄπονον εἶναι), the benefit which a receiver gains is secondary, derived solely from what is given. To give a benefit, on the other hand, takes effort (τὸ δ’ εὖ ποιεῖν ἐργῶδες),[[295]](#footnote-316) and therefore the giver receives the benefits of a sense of affection, nobility and worth, in quantities proportionate to their efforts, as a direct result of making those efforts. The idea seems to hark back to Plato’s episode between Socrates and Kephalos, in which Kephalos’ lack of great concern about money is said to stem from his having inherited his wealth. Like Plato, who writes that those who earn their money themselves, have a double reason for loving it, ‘For just as poets love their own poems and fathers their sons, so men who have made money take this money seriously as it is their own work, in addition to its usefulness, for which other people love it,’[[296]](#footnote-317) Aristotle explains this theory of trouble cost with the example, ‘for instance, those who have made money love money more than those who have inherited it.’[[297]](#footnote-318) For the same reason, Aristotle posits that ‘mothers love their children more than fathers, because parenthood costs the mother more trouble (ἐπιπονωτέρα)’.[[298]](#footnote-319) The additional affection, nobility and worth which arise from bestowing affection and care upon one’s child are benefits, sourced horizontally, which chip away at the great debt which the parent is due.

**4.3.1.4. Strife** Between Father and Son

Love, affection and benefits accrued do not, however, tell the whole story of most parent-child relationships. Insults and violence, anger[[299]](#footnote-320) or excessive demands,[[300]](#footnote-321) are suboptimal, but often very real features of these relationships too. Xenophon criticises the frequency with which such disorder in the father-son relationship occurs in Athens, contrasting it with a glowing description of familial serenity in Sparta.[[301]](#footnote-322) This is a complaint also echoed in Plato's accounts of a mature democratic society: ‘the pursuit of freedom makes it increasingly normal for fathers and sons to swap places: fathers are afraid of their sons, and sons no longer feel shame before their parents or stand in awe of them,’[[302]](#footnote-323) and which contrasts with the relative ideal of the timocratic state, whose template, once more, is Sparta.[[303]](#footnote-324)

**4.3.1.4.1. Father as Creditor Discharging his Son/Debtor**

Continuing to use the creditor-debtor metaphor, Aristotle reveals how the inequality of the relationship impacts on the resolution (or dissolution) of an extremely dysfunctional parent-child relationship. Like the case of a mother estranging herself from her young, such a situation in which a father disowns his child is rather exceptional. Aristotle posits that only when a son is excessively vicious might such a course of action be taken, because ‘natural affection apart, it is not in human nature to reject the assistance that a son will be able to render.’[[304]](#footnote-325) – Note how, once more, this substantiation centres on the expectation of a return for one's expended efforts. – He writes that the power to dissolve a relationship lies solely with the superior party, for, ‘a creditor may discharge his debtor, and therefore a father may disown his son (οἷς δ’ ὀφείλεται ἐξουσία ἀφεῖναι: καὶ τῷ πατρὶ δή).’[[305]](#footnote-326) A son, on the other hand, is deprived of this option, for he is the eternal debtor, who may never fully repay his debt, and must accordingly find other means to resolve the problem. Aristotle apparently considers the matter sufficiently explicated by the creditor-debtor metaphor, so it is to debt we must turn in order to attempt to understand his reasoning.

**4.3.1.4.2. Private Property and ‘Owning’ the Debt**

I suggest that the explanation lies in debt's relationship to private property. Not only does Aristotle consider a child, up to a certain age, to be his father's possession,[[306]](#footnote-327) but, already in Homeric guest-friendship, Donlon finds that the giver (or creditor) imposes obligations on his guest-ξεῖνος because he ‘“owns” the debt.’[[307]](#footnote-328) Donlon calls this the giver's advantage. This heritage of a creditor owning the debt might be the source of the idea, found in section 3.3.4., that a creditor is responsible for the existence of a debt and, by proxy, for his relationship to the debtor. If the father owns the child, while it is immature, and, later, can be said to own and be responsible for the relationship with the adult child and the debt which he owes, then it is in complete accordance with the institution of private property that he might dispose (ἀφεῖναι) of said property at will. He is merely exercising his advantage of ownership if he decides to disown an extremely unruly child. This option is rightly denied the child, however, because his advantage is that of receiving his father's previous care and investment.

**4.3.2. Masters and Slaves: Community of Interest**

The ownership of a child by his father is one feature which this first household relationship shares with another Ancient Greek household relationship: that between master and slave.[[308]](#footnote-329) The explicit ownership of the slave by his master its dominant marker. Aristotle defines a slave as ‘a live article of property.’ A slave is a possession, which belongs to the household in much the same way as a tripod or a loom.[[309]](#footnote-330) Aristotle calls slaves tools, though they differ from inanimate tools, in that they are used for doing things, rather than for making them.[[310]](#footnote-331) Contrary to the monarchical rule of father over son, Aristotle deems the form of rule between master and slaves to be tyrannical, as it aims at the master’s interests alone,[[311]](#footnote-332) though the simple one-sidedness of this judgement must be modified to account for his observation that masters and slaves are ‘unable to exist without one another,’ with them forming their relationship for the sake of security.[[312]](#footnote-333) Though not always the case, (and the concept of natural slavery was apparently contentious even in Aristotle’s day), Aristotle perceived situations when the abilities of master and slave were mutually supplementary and beneficial, ‘for one that can foresee with his mind is naturally ruler and naturally master, and one that can do these things with his body is subject and naturally a slave; so that master and slave have the same interest.’[[313]](#footnote-334) When the body and mind of a slave thus matches its status as slave, he finds that it is possible for masters and slaves to have ‘a certain community of interest and friendship.’[[314]](#footnote-335) Dobbs says of this shared interest within the master-slave friendship that, ‘the natural despotic partnership is a mutually beneficial association wherein a master gains studious leisure (*scholē*) by procuring in a noble way some of the necessities of life through his slave; the slave is both property and partner (*koinōnos*) of his master, in a life directed towards and by means of the *kalon...* the slave benefits along the way as a partner in the master’s life.’[[315]](#footnote-336) though the extent of this community of interest should not be overestimated.

**4.3.2.1. Natural Slave Debate**

As mentioned, Aristotle discloses that ‘thinkers’ find it unnatural that one man is the master of another, and rather share the modern view that only convention makes the one a slave and the other a freeman.[[316]](#footnote-337) He also records a median view, of those who think that, while it is unnatural for Greek men to be slaves, it is a natural state for captured barbarians.[[317]](#footnote-338) Ultimately, Aristotle concedes that the role of a slave is sometimes at odds with nature, as some slaves possess bodies and minds which are ‘erect and unserviceable for such [servile] occupations, but serviceable for life of citizenship,’though he nonetheless maintains support for natural slavery, when slavish virtue, intellect and body combine in the person of a slave.[[318]](#footnote-339)

**4.3.2.1.2. Duty and Borrowing to Counteract Unnatural Slavery**

When people who are not naturally disposed to slavery become enslaved, their situation is harmful, not only to they themselves, but also to the master-slave friendship. In such cases no community of interest and friendship between master and slave can exist, and the dynamic is solely maintained by means of law and force instead.[[319]](#footnote-340) Such unnatural slavery of Greek people was avoided by the enslaved person’s family members or a local *proxenos* providing *eranos* loans in order to buy back the slave, often at a greatly inflated price.[[320]](#footnote-341) Garlan calls this a ‘moral duty’ though financial gain might also help motivate the *proxenos*.[[321]](#footnote-342) The Gortyn law code shows how such loans for the buying back of a compatriot from slavery were supported by the state through the awarding of the special right of possession to the creditor until the loan is repaid.[[322]](#footnote-343) In the end, Aristotle leaves unanswered his musings on the validity of the concept of natural slavery, musings which question the differentiation between freemen and slaves if the latter are shown to possess moral virtue, though he concedes that he finds strange the idea that they might not possess moral virtue, ‘as they are human beings and participate in reason’.[[323]](#footnote-344) It is not the concern of this paper to tease out the possible solutions to this issue, but rather to turn to the practical reality of the institution of slavery and explore the debts inherent to friendship between master and slave.

**4.3.2.2. Master’s Debt to Fellow Slave-Owners**

As mentioned, these slaves are possessions, and the reality of being a possession means that one only exists as an assistant to another who truly is alive. Because the slave belongs wholly to the master, he or she owes everything to him; the master, on the other hand, does not belong to the slave[[324]](#footnote-345) and owes the slave as slave nothing (thus mirroring those relationships characterised by extreme inequality, such as between a prince and a beggar, or a god and a mortal, which consequent lack of mutuality prevents friendship.)[[325]](#footnote-346) As master, however, he has obligations both to his own household and to his fellow slave-owners. The master owes it to his fellow slave-owners to uphold the system of slavery, which is achieved by staunchly opposing any revolt in the slave population. Aristotle refers to the slaves in Crete, who were known to have never revolted, not due to some unusually good treatment, which included their being ‘conceded almost all the same rights’ as the citizens themselves,[[326]](#footnote-347) but rather, because ‘the neighbouring cities, even when at war with one another, in no instance ally themselves with the rebels, because as they themselves also possess a serf class this would not be for their interest.’[[327]](#footnote-348)

**4.3.2.3. Debt to Himself: The Interest of the Slave-Owner**

The slave-owner’s interests which are also at the heart of Aristotle’s definition of the master-slave friendship as one of tyranny – with the friendship conducted ‘in the greater degree with a view to the interest of the master, but incidentally with a view to that of the slave.’[[328]](#footnote-349) Aristotle’s explanation for this—‘for if the slave deteriorates, the position of the master cannot be saved from injury’—echoes his observation about creditors who watch over and care for their debtors because of their self-interested wish to secure their return.[[329]](#footnote-350) It therefore seems probable that the slaves received moderate treatment from their masters, an impression strengthened by Aristotle’s thought that, because a slave is owned by, and therefore is part of his master, he will not be treated with injustice because no master would choose to harm himself.[[330]](#footnote-351) However, because the master primarily considers his own interest, he owes the slave only as much benevolence as will maintain the slave’s value to the household.

4.3.2.4. Survey of Master’s Obligations

The obligations which a master owes both to himself and the community of masters are, for example, neither to allow slaves grow insolent, nor to make their lives too hard, because that might cause them to ‘plot against them [the masters] and hate them,’ an experience had by slave-owners in Sparta and Thessaly, which others would do well to avoid.[[331]](#footnote-352) Aristotle furthermore says that a master must excel over his slaves[[332]](#footnote-353) and ‘be the cause to the slave of the virtue proper to a slave.’[[333]](#footnote-354) The slave’s virtue appears to lacks all the characteristics, such as leisure, friendship and honour, which might lead to a truly virtuous life. Its virtue is limited to bodily fitness and usefulness, and when the slave fails to uphold these virtues, its punishment is also bodily, in the form of torture or beatings, which contrasts with the generally financial punishments dealt out to free citizens.[[334]](#footnote-355) Finally, Aristotle encourages that freedom be set as a reward before slaves,[[335]](#footnote-356) though incidences of manumission appear to have been relatively rare and, in the case of natural slaves, must have been contrary to the slave’s interests.[[336]](#footnote-357) As the master’s benevolence to the slave always serves primarily in the master’s interests, this detail need not bother him, and the slave’s interests are, in any case, not particularly heeded, as made evident by the statement, ‘no one allows a slave any measure of happiness, any more than a life of his own;’[[337]](#footnote-358) a statement which indicates that these are two things which a master definitively does not owe his slave.

**4.3.2.5. Slave as Debtor**

As Aristotle depicts the situation of the master as comparable to that of a creditor, this means that the situation of the slave like that of a debtor, and therefore that similar rules apply. The master must therefore be extremely wary of his slave’s intentions, for, as Aristotle wrote, a debtor ‘would be glad to have his creditor out of the way,’ and ‘is not particularly anxious to make a return.’[[338]](#footnote-359) Nonetheless, for the dual reasons that he both lacks freedom and owes his life entirely to his master, the slave is bound to make a return, which takes the form of living through the will of his master.[[339]](#footnote-360) Aristotle further specifies that the slave owes service by doing the menial jobs around the household,[[340]](#footnote-361) and is afforded no leisure from doing this.[[341]](#footnote-362) He must also put up with insults, to both himself and his friends,[[342]](#footnote-363) though indeed ‘there can be no friendship with a slave as slave, though there can be as human being,’[[343]](#footnote-364) which is an explication of the muddying of categories inherent in having human beings classified as tools. In sum, all hints of moderation are lost when it comes to the obligations owed by the slave to his master.

**4.3.3. Husbands and Wives, and the Language of Finance**

While already noted that the parent-child relationship was afforded primacy within the household, it goes without saying that the husband-wife relationship was also highly regarded, as marriage was the foundation of the succeeding oikos.[[344]](#footnote-365) This initial bond between man and woman was central to ensuring the prosperity of the oikos, as both partners bring to the family unit the advantages of their respective abilities, and ‘thus they supply each other's wants, putting their special capacities into the common stock.’[[345]](#footnote-366) Here, as throughout his research into the ways and customs of Greek society, Aristotle directs his focus towards the exchanges which are made between the two parties. This division of their labour, he says, is what differentiates human marriage from the pairing of animals. While, in nature, the begetting of children is the main reason and feature of pairing off, among humans it is secondary to the provision of the needs of life.[[346]](#footnote-367) Certainly, the begetting of children remains important for the continuance of the household into the future, and Aristotle further observes that those marriages which produce children are less often dissolved,[[347]](#footnote-368) but even this element of the successful marriage is translated by Aristotle into the language of finance: 'for children are a good possessed by both parents in common, and common property holds people together.'[[348]](#footnote-369) Like within the parent-child relationship, Aristotle guides us to consider what services each party brings to the relationship, 'for the friendship is not the same... of husband for wife as that of wife for husband,'[[349]](#footnote-370) and also to consider the debts owed within the marriage and by the couple to the household, which we are told they 'ought' to claim (δεῖ ζητεῖν).[[350]](#footnote-371)

**4.3.3.1. Mixture of Inequality and Equality**

Similar to the parent-child relationship, the association between husband and wife belongs primarily to the group of unequal friendships, as ‘the male is by nature superior and the female inferior, the male ruler and the female subject;’[[351]](#footnote-372) a comment which reflects the deeply patriarchal system which prevails in Greek society during the Classical Period.[[352]](#footnote-373) Both by merit of his being the eldest member of the family unity, and by being naturally better at command than women, Aristotle notes how the husband maintains continuous rule over his wife and household, like the monarch of a state.[[353]](#footnote-374) His superiority of age adds to the inequality of their relationship – Aristotle cites the ideal age of marriage for a man as about 37 years of age, while a woman was best married at age eighteen.[[354]](#footnote-375) Upon marriage, however, husband and wife are both considered adults, with each bearing the status of free citizen,[[355]](#footnote-376) which add characteristics of an equality to their otherwise unequal relationship, regardless of the different duties prescribed for male citizens and female citizens and the limits imposed on the freedom of women, in particular.[[356]](#footnote-377) Such an admixture of classification is a complicating factor in attempts to achieve an overall balance of equality within the husband-wife relationship, as the simple transfer of more services from the inferior party to the superior party applies, but not holistically, unlike in the parent-child relationship.[[357]](#footnote-378)

**4.3.3.2. Separate Rule Over Separate Spheres**

The obligations pertaining to the husband-wife relationship are summed up, in the main, by Aristotle's dictum that it is ‘his business is to get and hers to keep.’[[358]](#footnote-379) Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, featuring a reported conversation between Ischomachus and his wife, corroborates this view. Ischomachus explains how a man’s physical and mental capacities have been adapted to work at the outdoor occupations, tending to ‘ploughing, sowing, planting and grazing,’ and all such tasks as supply the ‘necessary provisions.’[[359]](#footnote-380) A woman’s physical and mental capacities, on the other hand, have been adapted to work indoors, where the provisions are stored, and she must ‘keep these and work at what must be done indoors.’[[360]](#footnote-381) Both Aristotle and Xenophon’s Ischomachus insist on autonomy for both the husband and the wife in carrying out their functions, with Ischomachus fearing divine punishment ‘for neglecting his own work or doing that of his wife.’[[361]](#footnote-382) The idea of a husband taking over his wife's work is depicted as a transgression on the same level as neglecting his own work; the word separating them is 'or' (ἢ), not 'and' or 'because,' thus demonstrating that these are two separate misdeeds, each of which justly punishable by the gods. In the duties allocated to her, therefore, the wife is the equal of her husband, completely entrusted with protecting and managing the assets of their household, to no lesser extent than the husband is entrusted with procuring these materials, and with safely conveying them into his wife's care. The preservation of this intrinsically important institution is a responsibility borne by both equally. Aristotle expresses it thus: ‘the husband rules in virtue of fitness and in matters that belong to a man’s sphere; matters suited to a woman he hands over to his wife.’[[362]](#footnote-383) Through thus divorcing the man's sphere from the woman's, Aristotle rejects Plato's idea that men and women share in the same nature, with the men merely enjoying the dual benefits of having this nature better exemplified and being spared the pains of childbirth.[[363]](#footnote-384)

**4.3.3.3. Contrasting Communion and the Tally-Stick**

This divergence of Plato from the other thinkers (Aristotle and Xenophon) becomes less apparent when dealing with the composition of a married couple. All three align in their support of marriages which join men and women who possess, in Price’s words, ‘contrasted fortune and temperament.’[[364]](#footnote-385) Xenophon endorses marriage when ‘each member of the pair is more useful to the other, the one being competent where the other is deficient.’[[365]](#footnote-386) Such balancing of dissimilar qualities is, according to Plato, in the *Laws*, better for the virtue of both partners,[[366]](#footnote-387) for the blending of their children,[[367]](#footnote-388) and for the balance of society as a whole.[[368]](#footnote-389) Price describes this union of complementary virtues within the best marriages as ‘tallies, which, put together, achieve a single mean,’ in a simile which calls on the ancient method of recording debts on a single piece of wood, which is subsequently split in two, with one part being kept by each party until, upon payment of the debt, they are once more reunited to complete the whole. Xenophon’s account deploys a similar use of the imagery of exchange, when he states that it is by reason of their varying qualities that ‘both sexes ought to give as well as receive’ (ἀμφοτέρους δεῖ καὶ διδόναι καὶ λαμβάνειν).[[369]](#footnote-390) This phrase expresses the same sentiment, in Greek, as is later expressed by the Latin *do ut des*, and shares with it the same debt-related connotations of financial exchange. Acting as a team in which the primary duty of both husband and wife is the virtue of self-control (σωφρονεῖν), which Ischomachus explains means ‘acting in such a manner that their wealth (τά ὄντα) is kept in the best condition possible, and that as much as possible will be added to them by fair and honourable means,’[[370]](#footnote-391) both they and their household will best flourish when each acts within their own sphere and according to their constrasting, yet complementary strengths and weaknesses.

**4.3.3.4. Husband’s Duties: Getting *vs* Begetting**

The sphere of the man, as already stated, is the outdoors. His duties are dominated by by the task of ‘getting,’ however a protective role also is assigned to him, as he is obliged to protect his wife against wrong-doers (ἐάν τις ἀδικῇ),[[371]](#footnote-392) even if said wrong-doer is their own son, as in the case of Socrates’ lambasting his son Lamprocles for failing to show gratitude to his wife (Lamprocles' mother) for the sacrifices she has made.[[372]](#footnote-393) Such protection further includes the husband’s duty to support his wife in child-bearing, in return for which the wife ‘conceives and carries this burden, bearing the weight of it, risking her life and giving up a share of her own nourishment.’[[373]](#footnote-394) The physical hardship and sacrifice which the wife endures in childbirth might be seen as compensation for the physical hardship endured by the man in his function of ‘getting’ outside the home. Indeed, this glimpse of equivalence between the spouses is compounded by an unavoidable assumption by the wife of part of her husband’s duties, as the woman’s ‘begetting’ overlaps to an extent with her husband’s task of ‘getting.’ The final duty listed by Ischomachus, which is owed by a husband to his wife acknowledges this sacrifice along with other of her wifely tasks, and that is to to supply his wife with honour, in amounts proportionate to the benefits she provides to the household, saying ‘the better partner you prove to me and the better guardian of the estate for our children, the greater will be the honour paid to you in the household.’[[374]](#footnote-395) Ischomachus follows this statement with yet another clue towards some sort of equalisation between the husband and wife, indeed, his pronouncement outstrips mere equality, as he bids his wife to ‘prove yourself better than I am, to make me your servant (σὸν θεράποντα),’[[375]](#footnote-396) though a subtly combined tone of condescension and idealisation is apparent throughout Ischomachus’ discussion of his wife, which rather undermines the gender-political progressiveness of these words.

**4.3.3.5. Wife’s Duties: Pushing Her Rule Too Far?**

The sphere of the woman, in complementary contrast, is indoors. Her duties include keeping the household goods in the best condition possible and dispensing with them as needed,[[376]](#footnote-397) producing and nursing children,[[377]](#footnote-398) bread-making, weaving,[[378]](#footnote-399) dispatching slaves,[[379]](#footnote-400) looking after sick servants,[[380]](#footnote-401) teaching slaves to spin and to tend the house,[[381]](#footnote-402) and meting out rewards and punishments to those who deserve it.[[382]](#footnote-403) Her duties could be considered the rule of the indoors, approaching, to a degree, the rule which her husband wields in the household. Ischomachus goes so far as to instruct his wife 'to think of herself as a guardian of the law in our household,'[[383]](#footnote-404) which he specifies amounts to ‘keeping an eye on things’ and ‘commending or punishing legal or illegal actions.’[[384]](#footnote-405) While the obvious recipients of said praise and punishment are the house-slaves and children who are so completely under her control, Ischomachus subsequently divulges that no member of the household is exempt from the wife’s guardianship: ‘ “I have often been singled out before now, Socrates, and condemned to suffer a punishment or pay damages.” -”By whom, Ischomachus?” I asked, “I am in the dark about that!” -By my wife!” He said.’[[385]](#footnote-406) This exchange once more conjures up an image of equality in the execution of the husband and wife's household duties, with the wife, at times, ruling over her husband, and he either being subject to this rule, or (perhaps) allowing himself to be subject to it. Counteracting this surface message, however, is, yet again, the mixed tone of condescension and idealisation emitted by Ischomachus regarding his wife, and also the shock with which Socrates receives the punchline-esque news of the wife awarding punishment to her husband. These factors indicate that such equal distribution of the authority to rule within the household was anomalous, an example, perhaps, of pushing the model of the separate, indoor and outdoor spheres of rule rather too forcefully.[[386]](#footnote-407)

**4.3.3.6. The Loan of Virtues and the Masculinised Wife**

The presence of this anomaly in Xenophon’s text does not, however, mean that his account differs significantly from Aristotle’s assessment. Aristotle writes that the task of ruling belongs to the man and that of being ruled to the woman, which aligns with the purport of Xenophon’s Socrates’ responce to Ischomachus’ description of his wife with the exclamation, ‘By Hera, Ischomachus, by your showing, your wife has a truly masculine mind!.’[[387]](#footnote-408) While she might simply be masculine by nature, Deslauriers’ comment that ‘natural subjects acquire virtue by borrowing the *phronêsis* of a natural ruler,’[[388]](#footnote-409) might equally apply, as she is lent these masculine virtues through her husband’s over-zealous training. Either way, Ischomachus’ wife starts to resemble those masculinised female guardians of Plato’s *Republic*, who are deemed capable of rule both by merit of the appropriate nature,[[389]](#footnote-410) and of their receiving the same education as the male guardians.[[390]](#footnote-411) Certainly she resembles a Spartan wife, born of the society revered by Xenophon, and condemned by Aristotle for their profligate tendency to grant freedom and wealth to married women, along with the rule which their wealth confers to them.[[391]](#footnote-412) These women constitute a threat to the Spartan man’s standing, writes Aristotle, because when females rule in the home, they are led to ‘carry abroad reports against the men.’[[392]](#footnote-413) Even though certain women, both Spartan and otherwise, were acknowledged as bearing either a masculine mind, masculine freedom, or masculine financial independence, these exceptions serve rather to bolster, rather than negate, the verity of the Aristotle’s judgement regarding the masculinity of the act of ruling, and the femininity of the position of being ruled.

**4.3.3.7. Equality of Sorts and the Lack of Debt within Marriage**

And yet, even Aristotle concedes a difference in the rule of a husband over his wife, when compared with his rule over his sons or slaves. He writes, ‘Hence justice exists in a fuller degree between husband and wife than between father and children, or master and slaves; in fact, justice between husband and wife is domestic justice in the real sense, though this too is different from political justice.’[[393]](#footnote-414) The ways in which domestic justice materially differs from political justice is disputed. However, the implication of Aristotle’s associating it, however loosely, with political justice – which is justice between completely equal fellow citizens, is that an equality of sorts exists between husband and wife, most unlike the inequality which dominates the other household relationships. Xenophon’s hints at equality between a husband and wife might be an awkward attempt to give this ‘equality of sorts’ due expression. Significantly, the use of the vocabulary of debt by the Greek authors corroborates this point. Though I have listed the various tasks and duties performed by husbands for their wives and vice versa as a form of social debt, much like that which exists between fathers and sons and masters and slaves, the writing recording marital obligations persistently avoids all reference to debt, debtors, creditors and owing. The most forceful expression of duty consists of Ischomachus’ wife’s question, ‘and how do the queen bee’s tasks resemble those that I have to do (ἐμὲ δεῖ πράττειν)?,’[[394]](#footnote-415) which follows Ischomachus’ descriptive image of the busy life of a queen bee within her hive. While the word δεῖ belongs to the vocabulary of debt, the isolation of its use, in this line alone, alongside the dearth of other words denoting debt, mark this household relationship out as different to the previous two. Neither here, nor in Plato’s or Aristotle’s accounts of marital relationships, is the vocabulary of debt employed to any notable degree. Admittedly, in Euripides’ *Medea*, financial imagery, including that of reckoning up an account, which Jason deems Medea inadequately ‘paid back,’ is used to describe the marital relationship,[[395]](#footnote-416) though by all accounts, the depiction of marriage presented in this play cannot be held up as a paradigm of either good or usual practice. In the main, it appears that husbands and wives were not considered, even metaphorically, akin to creditors and debtors. Lacking the explicit inequality which said roles signify in other relationships, one recalls the advice given to Ischomachus and his wife that they both practice self-control to keep and add to the wealth of their shared household, and gets a sense that a married couple was thought of as a team. Though power dynamics still exist within teams, which helps to explain the residual motif of ruling and being ruled, nonetheless the partners within a team are fundamentally equal. They form a unified body which might take out and call in debts with diverse outside parties, but do not, themselves, consider the internal sharing out of duties and tasks within their team comparable to the debts which inhere between unequals.

**4.4. Conclusion**

Write Conclusion!

1. Hardie (1968), p.334. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Cf. Sections 3.1.2 and 2.6.5.2.1.ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
3. *EN*1131a1. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
4. *EN*1130b30-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
5. [Rackham translation, slightly altered]. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
6. *EN*1133a22-24 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
7. Danzig (2000), pp.415-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
8. *EN*1132b33. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
9. Though, strictly speaking, the builder-shoemaker line is invoked to demonstrate not distributive justice, but another category, difficult to exactly position within Aristotle’s system, which he refers to as ‘reciprocity’ or ‘proportional reciprocity’ – more on the potential differences/overlap between Aristotle’s reciprocity and debt at 4.1.6.ff. Cf. also 4.1.4, note 58. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
10. *Pol.*1301b29-36, 1317b2-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
11. *EN*1158b30-3. Aristotle calls arithmetic justice the secondary form. In friendship this order is reversed, with justice primarily being calculated arithmetically, and geometric calculations being only secondary, ( *EN*1158b29-33) – this is thought to stem from both participants in “perfect” friendship being ‘equal in  
    sharing the same aspiration, the same propulsion, the same longing.’ cf. Inamura (2015, p.155), and (quoted) Baracchi (2009, p.23). tle, or an unnoticed contradiction (assuming that friendship is the first basis of the polis)? [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
12. *EN*1158b30-3, *Pol.*1280a12-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
13. *Pol.*1287a13-19. The same type of geometric calculation may be made for debts owed and owing. For example, Graeber (2011, pp.6-7) observes that, ‘throughout history, certain sorts of debt, and certain sorts of debtors, have always been treated differently than others,’ and elsewhere (p.22) adds that ‘it’s almost impossible to pretend that those lending and borrowing money are acting on purely “economic” motivations (for instance, that a loan to a stranger is the same as a loan to one’s cousin).’ [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
14. Cf. section 2.6.5.ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
15. Hume, (2003 (1734-40)),3.2.2; p.427. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
16. Sowell’s (2002 (1999)) inveighing against the practicality of geometric calculations of justice leads him to support its abandonment in favour of arithmetically calculated justice. His argument is confused, however, both because his examples attesting the difficulty of achieving justice through geometric calculation overwhelmingly belong to the field of corrective justice (concerning matters of crime and retribution, cf. 4.1.2.ff.), and not to the geometrically calculated field of distributive justice (cf.pp.10, 19-20, 31-2); as well as because, despite, on p.14, going so far as to label hubristic the attempt to determine the net balance of the various advantages and disadvantages accruing to one across the different stages of life and in a complex and changing society, on p.46 he contradicts that position, and advocates for tailoring to the individual circumstances of each person the amount and type of help which they might be given. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
17. *EN*1131a22-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
18. *Pol.*1302a17. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
19. *Pol.*1302a25-8 [Ross translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
20. *Pol.*1304a34-40 [Ross translation]. Cf. 1307A6-8: ‘But the actual overthrow of both constitutional governments and aristocracies is mostly due to a departure from justice in the actual framework of the constitution.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
21. Cf. Balot (2001), p.45, Polansky (1991), p.325. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
22. *Rep.*343e. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
23. *Rep.*344c. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
24. *Rep.*343d. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
25. *Rep.*343e. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
26. *Rep*.344c. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
27. *Rep*.343d. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
28. *Rep.*351e-352a. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
29. Cf. Cairns (2020) for explication of how the verb πλεονεκτεῖν carries both this meaning and the usual translation of ‘being greedy’; and section 4.1.4.3.2.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
30. *Rep.*349c. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
31. *Rep.*351d. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
32. *Rep.*351d. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
33. *Rep.*359c-361d. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
34. 613d [Shorey translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
35. 613d-e [Shorey translation]Cf. Rep.352a, where it is described how the unjust man suffers, inside himself, the same conflict which afflicts his city: though the unjust man may appear happy, resplendent with the trappings which accompany his gain, in truth he is constantly seeking to secure more and more gain, he can never enjoy the results of his achievements, and aware of the jealousy in which he is viewed by all other citizens in his city, he can never rest easy – he is tormented by a lack of self-agreement and is an enemy to himself. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
36. *Rep.*612b. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
37. A crisis not dissimilar to the 2007-8 financial crisis, which brought the topic of debt increasingly into the public eye. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
38. *Pol*.1266b14-17. Cf.4.1.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
39. *Ath.Pol.*12.4, cf. Solon Fr.36. The literature on these boundary stones is immense, beginning with Fine (1951), Finley (1952). [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
40. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
41. *Ath.Pol.*4.5. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
42. *Ath.Pol.*5.1, 12.4, cf. Solon Fr.36. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
43. *Ath.Pol.*6.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
44. *Ath.Pol.*10.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
45. *Ath.Pol.*12.1 (Solon Fr.5) [Rackham translation].

    a [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
46. *Ath.Pol.*12.3 (Solon. Fr.34) [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
47. *Ath.Pol.*12.4 (Solon Fr.36) [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
48. Bury and Meiggs (1994 (1975)), p.124. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
49. *Ath.Pol.*11.2 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
50. *Ath.Pol.*13.3-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
51. *Pol.*1301b29ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
52. *Pol.*1302a2-8 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
53. *Pol.*1301b26-7 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
54. *Pol.*1266b30-2 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
55. Solon was suspected of having given forewarning about the debt cancellations to these few, who subsequently took out both loans of money and mortgages on large areas of land, banking on the information that the need to make repayments would soon cease to exist. *Ath.Pol*.6.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
56. *Pol.*1267b5-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
57. *EN*1131b34-1132a2. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
58. *EN*1130b34-1131a1, 1131b25-6, 1132a11-19. Though, as Irwan (1990), p.624, footnote 11, points out, if cheating among citizens of a *polis* were to get out of hand, the destruction of trust would fundamentally damage the political life of the city also. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
59. *EN*1132a7-10, cf. section 4.1.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
60. *EN*1131a1-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
61. *EN*1131a3-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
62. *Pol*.1258b23-26. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
63. Cf. section 5.4.5.ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
64. *Pol*.1327a26-30. The judgment parallels and reinforces Aristotle’s contrast of the potential limitlessness of (good) charis and (detrimental) lending at interest, which we will explore at 4.1.7ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
65. *Pol*.1258b25-27. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
66. *EN*1135b4-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
67. *EN*1132a2-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
68. e.g. Finley (1970), p.6, and Joachim (1951), p.137 insist that Aristotle excludes ‘just price’ from his analysis, whereas Soudek (1952), pp.51-2 argues from a position of its having been included. Irwan (1990), p.429, takes for granted that the just price is included. Meikle (1995) does not address the issue. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
69. Finley (1970), p.6. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
70. *EN*1132b13-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
71. Rackham (1934), p.279, footnote d. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
72. Joachim (1951), p137. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
73. *EN*1164b6-10 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
74. *EN*1164b16-21 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
75. *EN*1164b18-19; Danzig (2000), p.412: ‘ It is the concern for κοινωνία that encourages Aristotle to overcome his reservations about the marketplace expressed in Book 1 of the Politics and to suggest the extension of monetization ... Aristotle is not concerned at all with the “absolute” fairness of a repayment, but with its fairness within the context of a given city.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
76. *Pol.*1266b38-40, 1267a38-40, 1281b29-31, 1294a19-25, 1296a1-3, 1303b15-18, 1318a3-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
77. *EN*1131a1-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
78. *EN*1132a6-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
79. *EN*1132a11-13. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
80. LSJ, s.v. “ ζημία.” [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
81. *EN*1131b33-1132a7. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
82. *EN*1132a4-7, Meikle (1991), p.195. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
83. *EN*1132a20-5, 1133b3. For Graeber, (2012, p.386) such equivalence between humans ‘only seems to occur when people have been forcibly severed from their contexts,’ but this assertion is here shown not to be true. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
84. *EN*1132a25-9, 1133b3, 1133b16-18. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
85. *EN*1132a6-11, 1132b2-7, 1138a12-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
86. Ross (1995), p.217-8, Urmson (1991), p.74, Miller, (2007), p.92, Pakaluk (2005), p.196 [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
87. Littman (1979), pp.24, 26, Seaford (2004), p.195 [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
88. Gagarin (1979), p.303, MacDowell (1999), p.16 [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
89. e.g., Soudek (1952), p.51, Englard (2009), p.9, Campos (2013), 100-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
90. *EN*1132b19-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
91. *Pol.*1336b10-13: beating, marks of dishonour*.* 7.15.7, *EN*1104b17-19: pain, 1110a26-35: death, pain, 1138a13-15: marks of dishonour, 1162b31-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
92. *EN*1162b25-30: ‘the obligation is clear and cannot cause dispute.’ Brickhouse’s (2004) estimation, that making the perpetrator suffer the same amount of evil as the victim suffered, remains vague as to how this should be quantified. Solon’s laws, on the other hand, are very specific about the type and quantity of compensation that must be paid for the offences of homicide, rape of free women, procuring, verbal insult in particular locations, verbal insult of the dead and the export of food. See Ruschenbusch (1966), Frr.11-12, 23-5, 16, 30, 32, 33, and Seaford (2004), p.195. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
93. Though Aristotle gives no concrete indication of how this might happen in the case of non-monetary punishment: cf. Winthrop (1978), p.1204. For an in-depth examination of homicide law in Athens, see Bonner and Smith (1968), pp.192-231. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
94. *EN*1132a29-32 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
95. *EN*1132a29-32. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
96. *EN*1130b8-10, cf. chapter 3 (sections 3.1.2 and 3.2.3). [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
97. *Pol*.1307a26-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
98. *EN*1133b3. Cf. section 4.1.5. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
99. *EN*1129a32-3 [Rackham translation]; cf. similar statements at *EN*1129b7-10, 1136b34-1137a2. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
100. *EN*1129b2-3 and 7-10, 1130a24-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
101. Young (2006), p.190. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
102. *EN*1130b30-5, Irwin (1988), pp. 429–430), Miller (2007), p.93, Soudek (1952), p.53, further scholars of this opinion are Hardie (1968), p. 194, Pakaluk (2005), p. 195–196. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
103. *EN*1132b24-8 [Rackham translation], Finley (1970), p.7, Young (2006), p.187, Miller Jr. (1991), alludes to the controversy, but chooses to take neither side, p.300, footnote 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
104. Rosen (1975), p.237. Cf sections 2.6.4.1, 3.3.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
105. Danzig (2000), p.410. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
106. *EN*1132b33, cf. Gauthier and Jolif (1970), pp.372-3 on the various meanings of reciprocity. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
107. *Pol.*1301b36-9, 1317b4-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
108. *EN*1132b22-5, cf. section 4.1.4. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
109. Ward, in a chapter entitled ‘Justice: Giving to Each What is Owed’ (2016, p.74), notes that calculating justice by proportion shows a concern with equality of outcome, rather than equality of opportunity. I believe that this observation serves to reaffirm how Aristotle’s theory of justice is more concerned with ‘what is owed,’ rather than with what is initially offered, which latter is given more consideration in his theory of friendship, on which more shall follow (section 4.2ff.). [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
110. *EN*1132b33. Graeber contrasts debt with the popular concept of reciprocity, that is, reciprocity based on equality, because of the hierarchy which, if it did not already exist prior to a debt relation, certainly results from one. Reciprocity based on proportion, however, as explained by Aristotle, does indeed reflect this hierarchy, and is therefore not comparable to the popular concept of reciprocity. Such hierarchy need not be long-standing, based on status, such as Aristotle’s example of the officer and the man, it can also be a simple asymmetry, as Lazzarato calls it in his reference to the same attribute of debt. (Lazzarato, p.86) Graeber explains that this hierarchy can also form as a result of a web of habit or custom if a person repeats such benevolence regularly, upon which the receiver becomes accepts the fact that the benefactor is simply a more benevolent person than they are, and ceases in their efforts to reciprocate, thereby changing the relationship to one in which proportionate returns are made. If this process does not occur, the receiver eventually becomes overwhelmed by the perceived need to reciprocate equally and either resents the relationship, or chooses to extract themselves from it altogether. Inequality for those who are unequal is therefore a prerequisite for maintaining the social bond. (Graeber (2012), p.110-11) [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
111. *EN*1132b24-8, cf. section 4.1.5. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
112. *EN*1132b28-32 [Rackham translation]. Note the similarity between this calculation of a return plus something in addition, and a related example of geometrically calculated justice, *charis,* on which cf. section 4.1.7. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
113. Recall that, for Aristotle, justice calculated according to worth (geometric justice) is the primary meaning of justice, while justice according to arithmetic proportion is secondary to this in all cases aside from friendship, where the opposite can (but need not) be the case, *EN*1158b29-33, *Pol*.1280a12-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
114. *EN*1132b32-3, 1158b29-32, 1162b2-5, *Pol*. 3.5.8. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
115. *EN*1132b32-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
116. *EN*1132b34-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
117. *EN*1163b12-13, 1132b34-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
118. *EN* 1132b34-1133a2 [Rackham translation]. Ross interprets this as a statement that ‘people will not exchange if they do not get as good as they give,’ which seems to be a rather mercenary view of things, though it does hold a strong resemblance to the reason for which human fairness is essential to the existence of debt. Ross (1995), p.218, Atwood (2008), pp.12-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
119. *EN*1132b33-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
120. While the importance of this part of Aristotle’s explanation of justice is widely acknowledged, there seems to be divergence in opinions on why that is; for example, Finley sees in it additional proof of the importance of community (κοινωνία) to the analysis of exchange in the Greek world (Finley (2011), p.32), while Meikle, concentrating on the application of justice to economic exchange, downplays its relevance, seeing it as an analogy to the archaic custom of gift-giving (Meikle (1979), p.72); see also Grant (1876), p.88. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
121. *EN*1133a2-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
122. **See Introduction, p. 7** [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
123. Danzig (2000), pp.408-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
124. Danzig (2000), pp.410. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
125. Danzig (2000), pp.409. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
126. Young (2006), p.188. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
127. Cf. note to section 4.1.6. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
128. *EN*1133a5. [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
129. *EN*1133a5-6. It is accordingly here, in the sphere of social debt, that which the previously established boundary between reciprocity and debt fades to nil. Cf. section 2.6.4.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
130. This ought not to be mistaken for an expression of agreement with the primordial debt theorists, where human existence is itself a form of debt which must forever be paid back to society as a whole. See Aglietta and Orléans (1982), as well as Ingham (2004), p.90. for concepts of primordial debt. Compare with Socrates’ depiction in Plato’s *Crito* (50e-51c)*,* of the laws of the city demanding obedience because of the debt that he owes them for his life, upbringing, education and protection, which they had enabled him to enjoy. [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
131. *Pol.* 1258b3-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
132. *EN* 1133a2-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
133. *Pol.* 1258b4-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
134. Young (2006), p.188. Zelnick-Abramovitz (2005), p.40 also states that χάρις generates debt and the obligation to repay. [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
135. Kant, (1930) p. 222. [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
136. Young (2006), p.187. [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
137. Atwood(2008), pp.12-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
138. Note Adam Smith’s (2009 (1759),p.266) comment on the phenomenon: ‘No benevolent man ever lost altogether the fruits of his benevolence. If he does not always gather them from the persons from whom he ought to have gathered them, he seldom fails to gather them, and with a tenfold increase, from other people.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
139. Kropotkin (1976 (1902)), pp.17, 164-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
140. Ross (1995), p.235. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
141. *EN*1161b5-8. Even between master and slave, in so far as the slave is a human being as well as a tool. Cf. section 4.3.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
142. *EN*1156a1-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
143. *EN*1157b1-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
144. *EN*1156a6-13, 1156b7-10. [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
145. *EN*1158b32-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
146. *Pol*.1280b48-40. [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
147. *EN*1156b33-1157a1, 1157b1-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
148. *EN*1158b12-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
149. Cf. Hood (2014), p.34. [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
150. e.g., Grote (1865, Vol.2, p.25), who writes that people in close relationships, such as cousins or brothers, share, e.g. the ‘obligation of mutual self-defence.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
151. Zelnick-Abramovitz (2005), p.47. [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
152. *EN*1158b16-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
153. *EN*1163b1-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
154. *EN*1158b21-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
155. Cf. section 1.6.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
156. *EN*1158b21-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
157. Though, as Curzer (2012, p.259) highlights, care are must be taken not to confuse this equalised form of the original friendship of inequality with a friendship of equality. The two remain quite different, though the resulting concord is shared by both. [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
158. *Pol*. 1254a22-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
159. Inamura (2015), p.116ff, *EN*1098b31-1099a7, 1169b10-13, 1176a33-b9. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
160. Sousa (2016), p.166. [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
161. Cf. sections 3.3.1ff. and 4.1.7ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
162. Inamura (2015), p.122, *EN*1144b26-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
163. *EN* 1157a3-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
164. While they are dissimilar, they are not unequal, as inequality refers to status or quantity, rather than type. [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
165. *EN* 1157a13-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-186)
166. *EN* 1164a1-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-187)
167. *EN* 1164a5-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-188)
168. Xen. *Hell.* V.3.14-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-189)
169. *Pol*.1280b11-13**.** [↑](#footnote-ref-190)
170. *EN* 1164a16-18. [↑](#footnote-ref-191)
171. *EN*1156b7-12, 1158a18-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-192)
172. *EN*1157b37-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-193)
173. *EN*1162a34-1162b3. Cooper notes (1980, p.307), e.g., an implication that inequality may develop even within a friendship of virtue, as one party may ‘outdo the other in beneficence.’ Nonetheless, Aristotle is quite insistent that friendship of virtue embodies a friendship of equality in its true sense. *EN*1157b37-1158a2, 1162b6-13. [↑](#footnote-ref-194)
174. *EN*1171b33-1172a8. [↑](#footnote-ref-195)
175. *EN*1156b18-20, 1156b25-7 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-196)
176. *EN*1156b27-30, ‘other self: *EN* 1112b27-9, 1166a30-3, 1166b1-2, 1171b33-4, Stern-Gillet (1995), p.17. [↑](#footnote-ref-197)
177. *EN*1170b5-7,1171b33-1172a8. Vernant (1989, p.214ff) explains this difference in self-perception between the Greeks and people today, saying that, based on the different view of the individual compared to the group, the Greeks did not conceive of being able to apprehend oneself, but rather, in the same way as an eye can only look at what is beyond one, it is only possible to perceive oneself in the effect one has on those nearby. Who can say that this isn’t the source of, e.g., Fichte’s reflections on perception and the consequential existence of both oneself and the other (Cf. Davis (2018) on Fichte’s ties to Hellenism). [↑](#footnote-ref-198)
178. *EN*1163a2-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-199)
179. Stern-Gillet (1995), pp.154, 162, 164, 169. [↑](#footnote-ref-200)
180. *EN*1155b28-32 This is in direct contrast to friendship of utility, where gain is the primary goal of the friendship. [↑](#footnote-ref-201)
181. *EN*1165a29-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-202)
182. *EN*1159b32-3, *Pol*.1263a29-31. [↑](#footnote-ref-203)
183. *EN*1169b10-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-204)
184. *Pol.*1263a26-7, Irwin (1991), p.201. [↑](#footnote-ref-205)
185. *EN*1165b17-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-206)
186. *EN*1130a15-19. [↑](#footnote-ref-207)
187. *EN*1169a25-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-208)
188. *EN*1165a2-5 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-209)
189. *EN*1169a27-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-210)
190. *EN*1169a29. [↑](#footnote-ref-211)
191. *EN*1169a18-33 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-212)
192. *EN*1102b32-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-213)
193. *EN*1165a29-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-214)
194. *EN*1157b20-1, 1170b12-13. [↑](#footnote-ref-215)
195. *EN*1157a21-6 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-216)
196. *EN*1171b20-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-217)
197. On initiating the exchange, cf. sections 3.3.4 and 4.1.7. [↑](#footnote-ref-218)
198. *EN*1171b25-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-219)
199. *EN*1165b12-13 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-220)
200. *Pol*.1323a31-4 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-221)
201. Cf. discussion of ἀδικεῖσθαι and other forms of injustice: section 3.2.3.1.1ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-222)
202. *Pol.*1328a11-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-223)
203. Cf. section 4.1.4.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-224)
204. *Pol.*1328a16-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-225)
205. *EN*1167b11-16 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-226)
206. *EN*1157a26-30, 1158b1-12. [↑](#footnote-ref-227)
207. *EN*1157b1-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-228)
208. *EN* 1171a16-18. [↑](#footnote-ref-229)
209. *EN*1156a14-19. [↑](#footnote-ref-230)
210. *EN*1158b1-4, cf. section 4.2.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-231)
211. *EN*1156a14-24. [↑](#footnote-ref-232)
212. *EN*1163a1-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-233)
213. *EN*1163a1-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-234)
214. *EN*1158b21-5 [↑](#footnote-ref-235)
215. Cf. section 4.1.6.1ff. Pakaluk (1998), p.141. [↑](#footnote-ref-236)
216. *EN*1164b31-4 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-237)
217. *EN*1162b5-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-238)
218. *EN*1165a2-5, cf. section 4.2.6.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-239)
219. *EN*1170b20-8 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-240)
220. *EN*1148a28-1148b2; cf. section 4.1.4.3.2.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-241)
221. *EN*1156a24-7 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-242)
222. *EN*1156a27-31 το συμφέρον is also the word for ‘advantage,’ which is what induces people to enter relations of financial debt. [↑](#footnote-ref-243)
223. *EN*1158b32-5 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-244)
224. *EN*1159b13-16, cf. section 4.2.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-245)
225. *EN*1158a22-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-246)
226. *EN*1169b24-5 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-247)
227. *EN*1158b32-5, 1159b13-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-248)
228. Urmson (1991), p.110, *EN*1158a21-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-249)
229. LSJ, s.v. “ἀγοραῖον.” [↑](#footnote-ref-250)
230. Stern-Gillet points out that this negativity could also be seen as a means to highlight by contrast the good terms with which Aristotle describes the friendship of virtue. Stern-Gillet (1995), p.65. [↑](#footnote-ref-251)
231. Aristophanes, *Acharnians,* ll.21-37, Herodotus 1.153.1. See also Desmond (2006), p.49. [↑](#footnote-ref-252)
232. Violating justice: *Pol*.1266a37-9, 1266b8-14, 1267a38-1267b9, 1301b26-9, 1302a25-32, 1302b5-15 Civil Strife: *EN*1129a32-5, 1129b7-10, 1130b24-8.See also Balot (2001), pp.44-54. [↑](#footnote-ref-253)
233. *EN*1162b16-21, 1162b34-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-254)
234. Young (2006), p.190, See also Balot (2001), p.28, Note 16. Aristotle’s statement that greed usurps the moral compass of most people and causes them to spurn nobility, once the opportunity for increasing their personal gain or superiority arises, demonstrates a criticism of the ‘might is right’ argument, in which the strong deem that they owe nothing to the weak. Cf. note 236, below. [↑](#footnote-ref-255)
235. *EN*1162b16-21, *Pol.*1302a2531, cf. section 4.1.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-256)
236. *EN*1122a4-7 The Athenians asserting their power over the Melians in Thucydides’ account is an example of this vice of greed on a grand scale, and Aristotle could be criticising his adopted home city’s behaviour on that occasion in this passage, while Socrates’ refutation of the might is right argument proposed by Thrasymachus in Plato’s *Republic* may serve as the source of these criticisms. Thuc.5.89-111, *Rep.*338c. [↑](#footnote-ref-257)
237. *EN*1122a3-12. [↑](#footnote-ref-258)
238. *EN*1121b32-1122a13. [↑](#footnote-ref-259)
239. Millett (1991), pp.43-4, Grote (2002 (1907)), p.26. [↑](#footnote-ref-260)
240. Millett (1991), pp.180-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-261)
241. Finley (1977 (1973)), p.139. [↑](#footnote-ref-262)
242. *Pol.*1258b25-27. [↑](#footnote-ref-263)
243. *Pol*.1258b3-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-264)
244. Aristophanes, *The Clouds,* ll.34-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-265)
245. *Pol.*1258b3, Mulgan (1977), p.49. [↑](#footnote-ref-266)
246. Cf. sections 4.1.7.ff., 4.1.6.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-267)
247. *EN*1162b25-9 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-268)
248. Dover (1994), p.292. [↑](#footnote-ref-269)
249. Cf. section 1.5.6.1. on usually assigning these personal elements only to social/moral, rather than financial debts. [↑](#footnote-ref-270)
250. *EN*1157a23-6, cf. section 4.2.6.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-271)
251. Liberalness: *EN*1120a7-12, 1120a-31, Friendliness: *EN*1155b27-1156a5, 1159b25-36, 1165a28-34, *Pol.*1263a29-31, cf. Friendship of Virtue (section 4.2.6.ff.). [↑](#footnote-ref-272)
252. Smith (1911 (1776)), p.13. As mentioned previously (cf. footnote 14, section 1.2.), this famous line from Smith’s *Wealth of Nations* is widely, but wrongly, accepted as being representative of his views. In fact, as his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* argues, Smith believed quite strongly in the power and prevalence of benevolence, even within commercial transactions. Nonetheless, the inclusion of this famous phrase is an acknowledgement of this one conception of business affairs, to which Smith adds and explores several others, which have benevolence, trust and mutual confidence and their core. [↑](#footnote-ref-273)
253. *EN*1167b19-26. [↑](#footnote-ref-274)
254. Cf. the necessity of the continued existence of both a debtor and a creditor, in order for a debt to exist: section 1.5.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-275)
255. ‘ἐκ πονηροῦ θεωμένους,’ EN1167b27. [↑](#footnote-ref-276)
256. *EN*1167b26-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-277)
257. *EN*1167b28-31. [↑](#footnote-ref-278)
258. Mulgan (1977), p.38-9, (1999), p.112, Nagle (2006), p.177-8, 199-200. [↑](#footnote-ref-279)
259. e.g., Hesiod (*Works and Days* 405): ‘first and foremost (πρώτιστα) a house and a wife and an ox for the ploughing;’ Plato, *Rep.*434c, 545d-e: ‘do you suppose that constitutions spring from the proverbial oak or rock and not from the characters of the citizens;’ Aristotle, *Pol*.1252a9-10, 1252b31-1253a1: ‘every *polis* exists by nature, inasmuch as the first partnerships so exist; for the *polis* is the end of the other partnerships...,’ 1253b1-3, see also Urmson (1991), p.112, Nagle (2002), p203. Aristotle tends to emphasise the differences between the household and the polis rather more than Plato, assigning each, e.g., different kinds of rule (Cf. Pellegrin (2013 (2011)), p.105), compared with Plato *Statesman* 259b, ‘“is there much difference between a large household organization and a small-sized city, so far as the exercise of authority over it is governed?” - “None.”’ [↑](#footnote-ref-280)
260. *EE*1242b1. [↑](#footnote-ref-281)
261. Patterson (2001 (1998)), p.106. [↑](#footnote-ref-282)
262. Note, indeed, that the legitimacy of a child was accorded legal definition in Athenian law, while marriage is only assumed rather than defined: Patterson (2001 (1998)), p.109. [↑](#footnote-ref-283)
263. Xen. *Mem*.2.2.3 (Marchant (1923)). [↑](#footnote-ref-284)
264. *Soph..*230a. [↑](#footnote-ref-285)
265. *EN*1161a16-17. Cf. Pomeroy (1997, p.141), who provides manifold evidence that, should the father fail to provide either a trade or some other future means of support to his son, the son’s obligation to maintain his parents in return falls away. [↑](#footnote-ref-286)
266. An insight extracted from an explanation on the disadvantages of written text, *Phaedrus* 275e. [↑](#footnote-ref-287)
267. *EN*1160b24-6, 1161a20-1. While Aristotle often refers to the relationship between fathers and children in particular, he just as regularly speaks of the relationship between parents and children, and at times (such as at *EN*1158b15-23) it is clear that he considers no difference between the role of fathers and the role of parents, though, naturally, at other times he does make a distinction. My use of the two words aims to reflect the original use within each context. [↑](#footnote-ref-288)
268. *Pol.*1335b35. [↑](#footnote-ref-289)
269. *Pol.*1334b39-1335a2. [↑](#footnote-ref-290)
270. *EN*1161b18-26. [↑](#footnote-ref-291)
271. Kristjánsson (2007), p.121, Young (2006), p.187. [↑](#footnote-ref-292)
272. *EN*1161a20-1, *Laws* 931b11. [↑](#footnote-ref-293)
273. *Rep.*425b. [↑](#footnote-ref-294)
274. *EN*1165a25-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-295)
275. Xen. Mem.2.3.16 [↑](#footnote-ref-296)
276. *EN*1180b3-7, *Laws* 4.717d, *Crito* 50e-51e. [↑](#footnote-ref-297)
277. *Pol.*1262A25-30, *Crito* 51c, Xen. *Mem*.2.2.13. [↑](#footnote-ref-298)
278. *Laws* 4.717c. [↑](#footnote-ref-299)
279. Cf. section 2.6.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-300)
280. *Laws* 717b-c [Saunders translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-301)
281. *EN*1165a21-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-302)
282. *Laws* 4.717d**.** [↑](#footnote-ref-303)
283. *Laws* 4.717e-718a. [↑](#footnote-ref-304)
284. Xen. *Mem*.2.2.13. [↑](#footnote-ref-305)
285. *EN*1161a16-18. [↑](#footnote-ref-306)
286. *EN*1161a18-24. [↑](#footnote-ref-307)
287. *EN*1163b19-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-308)
288. Cf. section 4.1.7.2.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-309)
289. Ward (2016, p.124) accounts for this irregularity to Aristotle’s usual way of calculating proportional justice, in which the inferior party owes proportionally more to the superior party, by perceiving a political-private dichotomy in Aristotle’s account. He sees a political angle, ruled by the monarch-subject friendship of inequality, in which the child owes an unpayable debt to its parent, and a separate private angle, which he deems more natural, and which displays a reversal of that hierarchy. My view is that horizontal repayments explain away a lot of this irregularity, while the fundamental chronological split in the meeting of both parents' and children's needs goes a long way to explain the rest. Even today there are few parents who, though superior, not irregularly feel themselves acting as a slaves to their inferior, yet tyrannical, young child. The estranged mother, in bestowing her love, has not yet reached the advanced age when she will miss having her needs met by her grown child. *Pol.*1335a33-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-310)
290. *EN*1159a27-37. [↑](#footnote-ref-311)
291. *EN*1159a32-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-312)
292. Xenophon’s account of motherhood (Mem.2.2.5) follows the same pattern: ‘The woman conceives and bears her burden in travail, risking her life, and giving of her own food; and, with much labour, having endured to the end and brought forth her child, she rears and cares for it, although she has not received any good thing (οὔτε προπεπονθυῖα οὐδὲν ἀγαθὸν), and the babe neither recognises its benefactress nor can make its wants known to her: still she guesses what is good for it and what it likes, and seeks to supply these things, and rears it for a long season, enduring toil day and night, not knowing whether she will get some favour in return (οὐκ εἰδυῖα εἴ τινα τούτων χάριν ἀπολήψεται).’ [Marchant translation]. This passage interrupts its descriptive flow only to pass comment on the mother’s not receiving any benefit in advance for her outlay and her not even knowing if she will get some return from her child. Either Aristotle was inspired by the brilliance of Xenophon’s intellectual contribution, or, more probably, it was a common, even a dominant feature of the Greek conception of social relationships to evaluate them in terms of debt, of benefits owed, of the expectation that a service be off-set by either an initial favour, or recompense after the fact. [↑](#footnote-ref-313)
293. *EN*1168a22-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-314)
294. *EN*1168a10-18, 20-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-315)
295. *EN*1168a23-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-316)
296. *Rep.*330c. The word ‘love’ is translated ‘feel complacency’ by several translators, however ‘love’ is a quite accurate translation for the original ἀγαπῶσιν. [↑](#footnote-ref-317)
297. *EN*1168a22-3 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-318)
298. *EN*1168a22-7. On this point also rests Aristotle’s fear that Plato’s suggested community of parents and children, in which none can identify his creator or creation with certainty, would loosen the bonds of affection between parent and child, and negatively impact society through a correlative reduction in the amount of effort invested into the upbringing of each child individually. *Rep*. 416E, *Pol.*1261b34-1262a2. [↑](#footnote-ref-319)
299. *Laws* 717d. [↑](#footnote-ref-320)
300. *EN*1164b22-5, 30-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-321)
301. Xen. *Mem*.3.5.15. [↑](#footnote-ref-322)
302. *Rep.*562e. Cf. *Laws* 701b. [↑](#footnote-ref-323)
303. *Rep.*544e-545a, cf. section 5.3.1.4.ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-324)
304. *EN*1163b23-5 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-325)
305. *EN*1163b22-3 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-326)
306. *EN*1134b10-14; cf. Pomeroy (2015 (1975)), p.65. [↑](#footnote-ref-327)
307. Donlon (1989), p.8. [↑](#footnote-ref-328)
308. Aristotle writes that, aside from the poorest households, which, ‘having no slaves, are forced to employ their women and children as servants (*akolouthoi*),’ Greek households typically possess slaves: *Pol.*1323a5-7 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-329)
309. *Pol.*1253b31-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-330)
310. *Pol.*1254a7-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-331)
311. *EN*1160b29-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-332)
312. *Pol.*1252a26-35. [↑](#footnote-ref-333)
313. *Pol.*1252a32-5 [Rackham translation], cf. 1255b5-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-334)
314. *Pol.*1255b12-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-335)
315. Dobbs (1994), p.87. [↑](#footnote-ref-336)
316. *Pol.*1253b21-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-337)
317. *Pol.*1255a28-9. Slave labour became particularly necessary in Athens following Solon’s reforms, as Solon’s outlawing debt bondage among Greeks created a need for a new source of labour; Garnsey (1996), p.4. [↑](#footnote-ref-338)
318. *Pol.*1254b33-4, 1255b1-6, Garnsey (1996), pp.107-110. [↑](#footnote-ref-339)
319. *Pol.*1255b14-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-340)
320. e.g. Plato was bought back from slavery at a price of 2600 drachmas by Niceratus, when the typical price of a slave was more in the region of 200 drachmas. Garlan (1999), p.21, citing Diogenes Laertius III, 20 and Demosthenes LIII, 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-341)
321. Garlan (1999), p.19-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-342)
322. *Inscriptiones Creticae* IV 72, col.VI. II. 46-55. [↑](#footnote-ref-343)
323. *Pol.* 1259b21-9 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-344)
324. *Pol.* 1254a9-13. [↑](#footnote-ref-345)
325. *EN*1158b32-5, cf. section 4.2.2. [↑](#footnote-ref-346)
326. Save for participation in gymnastic exercises and the possession of arms, *Pol.*1264a21-3 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-347)
327. *Pol.*1269a39-1269b3 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-348)
328. *Pol.*1278b32-36 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-349)
329. *Pol.*1278b36-37 [Rackham translation]. Cf. section 4.2.7.8. [↑](#footnote-ref-350)
330. *EN*1134b8-13. This comment diverges from the creditor-debtor image, in so far as we discovered in section 3.3.5. that it is possible for a creditor to willingly deprive himself of the benefit of his wealth, and there fore commit injustice to himself. [↑](#footnote-ref-351)
331. *Pol.*1269a37-9, 1269b8-11 [Rackham translation]. Keyt (1991), p.264. [↑](#footnote-ref-352)
332. *Pol.*1325b4-5 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-353)
333. *Pol.*1260b3-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-354)
334. Cambiano (1999), p.35, citing Demosthenes XXII 55. Cf. section 4.1.4.3.ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-355)
335. *Pol.*1330a32-4. [↑](#footnote-ref-356)
336. Garnsey (1996), p.7, 98. When manumission did take place it either took the form of a straight-forward gift of freedom or the master gave the slave the slave to buy his own freedom. Hunt (2018), p.121, Zelnick-Abramovitz, p.152, 155. [↑](#footnote-ref-357)
337. *EN*1177a8-9 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-358)
338. *EN*1167b19-26 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-359)
339. *EN*1125a1-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-360)
340. *Pol.*1277a33-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-361)
341. *Pol.*1334a21. [↑](#footnote-ref-362)
342. *EN*1126a8-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-363)
343. *EN*1161b5-6. [↑](#footnote-ref-364)
344. Cf. Pomeroy (1997), p.33. [↑](#footnote-ref-365)
345. *EN*1162a21-4 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-366)
346. *EN*1162a18-21. [↑](#footnote-ref-367)
347. *EN*1162a29-34. [↑](#footnote-ref-368)
348. *EN*1162a28-9. [↑](#footnote-ref-369)
349. *EN*1158b15-18. [↑](#footnote-ref-370)
350. *EN*1158b20-1. [↑](#footnote-ref-371)
351. *Pol.*1254b13-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-372)
352. Though the imposition of the term ‘patriarchy’ by 19th century classicists, from Grote through Bachofen, Fustel and Engels (cf. Patterson (2001 (1998)), pp.8-23, 31-2) upon Classical Greek society was greatly influenced by the contemporary debate surrounding female participation in political (and domestic) rule, the term is not wholly inapplicable, as it quite adequately summarises the subordinate role of females to males throughout most of Ancient Greece. Note, especially, the breadth of difference between acknowledging an intrinsically patriarchal social structure and reading a deeply oppressive ‘oriental seclusion’ (another 19th century interest) into the lives of Ancient Greek females, as, e.g., Pomeroy (2015 (1975), pp.79-88); cf. Cohen (1989). [↑](#footnote-ref-373)
353. *Pol.*1252b21-2, 1259b1-11. [↑](#footnote-ref-374)
354. *Pol.*1335a29-30. [↑](#footnote-ref-375)
355. *Pol*.1275b33, 1278a28. [↑](#footnote-ref-376)
356. *Pol.*1269b13-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-377)
357. *EN*1134B16-18. Aristotle addresses these opposing elements to the relationship by describing how the rule of the husband over his wife as a free, equal person constitutes political government (*Pol.*1255b19-21), though his merit at commanding, which translates to his never exchanging the role governance with his wife, is an exhibition of aristocratic government (*EN*1160b33-5). Likewise, the form which this relationship takes is distinctly multifaceted, being described as a friendship of utility and pleasure combined, though concedeing that it can sometimes (with an exceptional wife!) be based on virtue (*EN*1162a24-6). A lot of nuance is therefore lost by any commentators (e.g., Nichols (1992), pp.29, 33) who restrict their analysis to only one aspect of the nature of governance within the husband-wife relationship. [↑](#footnote-ref-378)
358. *Pol.*1277b23-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-379)
359. Xen. *Oec.*7.19-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-380)
360. Xen. *Oec.*7.21 [Todd translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-381)
361. Xen. *Oec*.7.31 [Todd translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-382)
362. *EN*1160b33-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-383)
363. *Pol.*1260a20-4, *Rep.*454c ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-384)
364. Price (1990 (1989)), p.169. [↑](#footnote-ref-385)
365. Xen. *Oec*.7.28 [Todd translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-386)
366. *Laws* 6.773a6-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-387)
367. *Laws* 6.773d4. [↑](#footnote-ref-388)
368. *Laws* 6.773b7-c3. [↑](#footnote-ref-389)
369. Xen. *Oec*.7.26. [↑](#footnote-ref-390)
370. Xen. *Oec*.7.15 [Todd translation, adjusted slightly]. [↑](#footnote-ref-391)
371. Xen. *Oec*.7.25. [↑](#footnote-ref-392)
372. Xen. *Mem.*2.2.1-14. [↑](#footnote-ref-393)
373. Xen. *Mem.*2.2.5. [↑](#footnote-ref-394)
374. Xen. *Oec*.7.42. [↑](#footnote-ref-395)
375. Xen. *Oec*.7.42. [↑](#footnote-ref-396)
376. Xen. *Oec*.7.35. [↑](#footnote-ref-397)
377. Xen. *Oec*.7.34. [↑](#footnote-ref-398)
378. Xen. *Oec*.7.34. [↑](#footnote-ref-399)
379. Xen. *Oec*.7.33. [↑](#footnote-ref-400)
380. Xen. *Oec*.7.37. [↑](#footnote-ref-401)
381. Xen. *Oec*.7.41. [↑](#footnote-ref-402)
382. Xen. *Oec*.7.41. [↑](#footnote-ref-403)
383. Xen. Oec.9.15. [↑](#footnote-ref-404)
384. Xen. Oec.9.14-15 [Todd translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-405)
385. Xen. Oec. 11.23-25 [Todd translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-406)
386. Note, as Pomeroy points out (1997, pp.149-50), that even respectable, upper-class women could engage in the public sphere, by becoming priestesses, though this option was, admittedly, available only to those women born into those families with hereditary title to furnish the role. [↑](#footnote-ref-407)
387. Xen. Oec. 9.19 [Todd translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-408)
388. Deslauriers (2003), p.216. [↑](#footnote-ref-409)
389. Rep.454c-d ff. [↑](#footnote-ref-410)
390. Rep.456c ff. Note that statements regarding gender equality among Plato’s guardians does not transfer unto the population at large. *Crat.*392c shows, e.g., unqualified agreement that men are wiser than women. [↑](#footnote-ref-411)
391. *Pol.*1313b34-35. Aristotle is likely referring to Spartan heiresses, who he observes are often wealthy and therefore rule over their menfolk, a situation which he believes is largely to blame for the downfall of the Spartan state, *Pol.*1269b32-1270a32. Mulgan (1999, p.114) notes that Aristotle criticises the disorder of Spartan women in contrast with the ordered role of women under male rule in a ‘normal’ Greek household. [↑](#footnote-ref-412)
392. *Pol.*1269b13-1270a16 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-413)
393. *EN*1134b16-18 [Rackham translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-414)
394. Xen. *Oec*.7.32 [Todd translation]. [↑](#footnote-ref-415)
395. Cf. Mastronarde (2002), pp.31 and 36. In *Lysistrata*, that other extant play most concerned with women’s role within their marriage, reference to debt (l.648, προὐφείλω – owing the city for one’s nourishment) and finances (ll.495-500, 574 -87 – women seizing control of the city’s offices and finances and treating them as one does wool in weaving), seem to reflect a commentary on identical images in Plato’s writings (*Crito* 50d, *Rep.*520b-e, cf. section 2.6.4.1.1: Debt, Justice and the Philosopher Kings; and *Statesman* 279b ff.) rather than the actual situation of women in Athens. [↑](#footnote-ref-416)