***Plato and Aristotle on Craft and Craftsmen***

*Labour is blossoming or dancing where*

*The body is not bruised to pleasure soul*

William Butler Yeats, “Among School Children”

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**Craft**

The puzzle at the heart of Plato and Aristotle’s appraisal of work is that they both combine high praise for craftsmanship with frequent denigration of craftsmen. W.B. Yeats wondered “how can we know the dancer from the dance?”[[1]](#endnote-1) We might ask how Plato and Aristotle distinguish craftsmanship from craftsmen and why they honor the first and disparage the second. Both thinkers exclude craftsmen from citizenship, and yet Plato calls his philosophical rulers “the best possible craftsmen” and he calls ruling “the royal craft.”[[2]](#endnote-2)

Both thinkers praise the knowledge required for skillful work but disparage the manual skill and sheer toil of human labor; they praise those who conceptualize the task but disparage those who merely execute it. As such, their appraisals reflect their own views of the greater dignity of intellectual over physical activity, preventing them from seeing that the knowledge of craftsmen cannot be separated from their manual skills, and that craft knowledge can be acquired only through the body. Craftsmanship is the unity of conception and execution, mind and hand.

Most of the scholarly literature concerning economic issues in Plato and Aristotle is focused on property rights, buying and selling, money, and slavery.[[3]](#endnote-3) There is much less scholarship about the nature of craft, about the roles of work and labor in a good human life.[[4]](#endnote-4)

What attracted Plato to craftsmanship was its combination of instrumental rationality and orientation to the good of others. A craft, says Plato, exemplifies rationality because makers know in advance what they want to make and then, because of their genuine knowledge, reliably make it.[[5]](#endnote-5) Craftsmanship thus vividly illustrates the Platonic ideal of mind over matter, of invisible form over visible content. True makers do not copy existing artifacts, but look to the ideal form of what they plan to make.[[6]](#endnote-6) A genuine craft requires scientific knowledge, not mere practical know-how.

Both Plato and Aristotle compare craft knowledge to scientific knowledge on the grounds that: 1) it involves universal principles of causation, making crafts reliable and predictable; 2) the craftsman can explain how he produces the effects he does and can teach his craft to others, not just impart it by example.[[7]](#endnote-7) Both thinkers contrast craft with an acquired knack based on rules of thumb or with mere trial and error experience. Plato compares craftsmen to god, saying that they both possess genuine knowledge of what they make.[[8]](#endnote-8) As Aristotle says: “knowledge and understanding belong to craft rather than to experience . . . for men of experience know that the thing is so, but do not know why, while the craftsmen know the ‘why’ and the cause.”[[9]](#endnote-9) True craftsmen can teach their craft whereas men of experience can only impart their craft to those who imitate them.[[10]](#endnote-10)

Socrates interrogates a wide variety of Athenians to see if they know what they are talking about. He reports that the craftsmen do possess genuine knowledge of their craft; where they go wrong is in thinking that they also know about ethics and politics.[[11]](#endnote-11) Nothing is more common than for people with expertise in one domain to make pronouncements in others. But when Socrates interrogated the poets, he began to doubt whether poetry was truly a craft. The poets could not explain the meaning of their own poems any better than the bystanders; nor could the poets explain how they produced their poems: “I soon realized that poets do not compose their poems with knowledge, but by some inborn talent and by inspiration, like seers and prophets who also say many fine things without any understanding of what they say.”[[12]](#endnote-12)

Unlike a craftsman, a poet, or anyone engaged in what we would call the fine arts, does not know in advance what he will make. Indeed, as Pablo Picasso observed, if you know what you will create in advance, don’t bother. Works of art emerge through the mystery of what we call creativity or inspiration—meaning that artists never fully understand how they produce their art. The fine arts are rooted in craftsmanship, but transcend it in creativity, originality, and individual expressiveness. Plato has no word for the fine arts, but he lays the foundation for R. G. Collingwood’s influential distinction between crafts and arts.[[13]](#endnote-13) Whereas we moderns rank the fine arts above the crafts, Plato admires the rational knowledge of craftsmen more than the inspiration of artists.

What does craftsmanship have to do with the good of others? Plato brilliantly observed that crafts are inherently moral activities because every craft is oriented toward the good of the layman, not the expert: medicine is for the good of the patient, not the doctor; teaching is for the good of the student, not the teacher; and, above all, ruling is for the good of the ruled, not the ruler. Every genuine craft aims to benefit the weaker not the stronger party: shepherding is for the benefit of the sheep, not the shepherd. And because a craft involves genuine knowledge, a craft secures genuine human good, not illusory goods.[[14]](#endnote-14)

Although he calls ruling the highest craft, Plato often compares ruling to lesser crafts such as medicine, shepherding, horse breeding, navigation, weaving, and teaching. Like doctors, rulers administer harsh remedies and tell lies for the good of the patient; like shepherds, rulers guard their subjects from enemies and other dangers; like horse breeders, rulers ensure that the best citizens breed only with the best; like captains, rulers steer the ship of state; like weavers, rulers knit different kinds of people into the fabric of the city; like teachers, rulers lead citizens toward knowledge or at least true belief.[[15]](#endnote-15)

At other times, however, Plato contrasts the lesser crafts from the craft of ruling. In the lesser crafts, the craftsman knows the most efficient means to reach a given end, but not whether that end is justified in context. A doctor, for example, knows how best to treat an illness but not whether to treat an illness—if, for example, a patient is too old or infirm. The art of ruling is different and cannot be exercised without knowledge of the proper ends of politics. Plato says that in judging whether to treat an illness, a doctor acts as a statesman. That is why ruling is the royal craft.[[16]](#endnote-16)

Plato contrasts craft knowledge with an acquired “knack” (*tribē*) based on rules of thumb. Plato says that pastry baking and cosmetics are not crafts, but mere “knacks,” or tricks used to pleasure the body, just as rhetoric and sophistry are “knacks” or tricks used to pleasure the mind.[[17]](#endnote-17) These knacks flatter people by providing them with counterfeit goods: instead of nutrition, pastries offer only sweetness; instead of reasons, rhetoric offers only feel-good emotions. Since there is no science of what gives pleasure or flatters, there is no craft of pastry-baking or speech-making.[[18]](#endnote-18) For Plato, a true craft must provide a genuine good: health, not sweetness; knowledge, not flattery.

Plato pioneered the analysis of craft along these dimensions.[[19]](#endnote-19) First, there is a sharp distinction between means and ends. In a craft, we can always compare alternative paths to the same goal. We see progress within crafts because makers discover new ways to make old things. Second, a craft involves two stages: planning and execution. While planning, the end or goal comes first to guide the selection of means; while executing, the means come first and the end is reached through them. Third, a craft presupposes the prior existence of both the matter and the immaterial form: a maker merely informs the matter. Fourth, a craft always distinguishes parts from wholes, and rigorously subordinates the parts to the whole. In an artifact, the parts have no rights against the whole. Finally, every craft is inherently oriented to the good of the weaker party: medicine for the patient, not the doctor, and, most importantly, ruling for the ruled, not the ruler.

**Skills and Virtues**

Although Plato argues that all genuine crafts are intrinsically oriented to the good of others, Plato is aware that crafts, as concatenations of knowledge and skills, can be misused: doctors can use their craft to save or end lives; and rulers, notoriously, can exploit their subjects for their own benefit. Crafts are not virtues: crafts are skills that we acquire and wield; virtues are aspects of who we are. Virtues cannot be misused because they cannot be used at all. Plato insisted that rulers acquire not only the craft of ruling, but also the cardinal virtues, of justice, courage, temperance, and wisdom. Without those virtues, the craft of ruling, though oriented toward the good of the ruled, might be misused. Plato argues that *qua* craftsman, the ruler seeks only what is good for his people; but *qua* human being, the ruler might seek his own enrichment instead.[[20]](#endnote-20)

Aristotle describes craft as an intellectual virtue, not a moral virtue.[[21]](#endnote-21) A craftsman who errs by accident is a bad craftsman; a moral agent who errs on purpose is a bad person. Better that the craftsman err on purpose and better that the moral agent err by accident.[[22]](#endnote-22) Craft is a kind of instrumental cleverness (*deinotēs*), as when we say that someone is crafty. Practical wisdom includes cleverness in addition to moral virtue, so that the practically wise person is both clever and good. When you have craft, you still need practical wisdom to make good use of it: the medical craft can be used to produce health or disease.[[23]](#endnote-23) Craftsmanship, unmoored in moral virtue, is dangerous because it is capable of great good or evil, like any other form of cleverness.

Plato wants to argue that a true craftsman is, in one sense, a good person. By doing so, Plato lays the foundation for our distinction between a professional and a businessperson. Plato’s Socrates argues that in every true craft, the expert serves the needs of the layman and the stronger party serves the weaker party—not himself.

But, objects Thrasymachus, a shepherd takes care of his sheep, not for their benefit, but only so that he can later fleece or slaughter them for his own benefit.[[24]](#endnote-24) Is shepherding, then, not a craft? Is not the same true of most rulers, who rule for their own benefit? Socrates answers that when a shepherd fleeces his sheep or takes them to market, he is no longer acting as a shepherd but as a money-maker.[[25]](#endnote-25) Insofar as he practices the craft of shepherding, the shepherd acts only for the good of the sheep.

After distinguishing true crafts from the “craft” of money-making, Plato’s Socrates makes it clear that money-making is not a true craft because it serves the interest of the money-maker: “no craft or rule provides for its own advantage, but . . . it provides and orders for its subject and aims at its advantage, that of the weaker, not of the stronger.”[[26]](#endnote-26) Socrates then heaps contempt on money-making: “Don’t you know that the love of honor and the love of money are despised, and rightly so?”[[27]](#endnote-27)

A professional is someone who loves his craft because he wants to provide a unique benefit to others: health, knowledge, counsel, furniture, meals, etc. But, unless he is independently wealthy, he must also support himself by earning a fee. A money-maker or businessperson is someone who seeks his own advantage, not the advantage of those with whom he deals. That is why we usually trust professionals, like doctors and teachers, but not merchants—after all, we often think “let the buyer beware.” We cannot assume that a businessperson is motivated to act in our own interest. Plato and Aristotle respect the practice of the crafts but despise the pursuit of money for its own sake.

**Why Craftsmen Cannot Rule**

For Plato and Aristotle, a life of relentless getting and spending leaves little time for the pursuit of the highest goods, namely, politics and philosophy. Only those who are economically self-sufficient have the leisure to cultivate their minds and properly exercise their bodies. On a scale of self-sufficiency, they rank artisans above unskilled laborers or slaves, and farmers above artisans.

For Greek aristocratic culture, leisure (*scholē*) was the norm while work was the absence of leisure (*ascholia*); in our society, work is the norm and ‘free time’ is the absence of work. For the Greeks, work is a necessary evil for the sake of leisure; in our culture, free time is devoted to the “re-creation” of our energies for work. We make use of our free time with the habits of efficiency forged at work: we ‘work out’ at the gym, ‘work’ on our basketball game, and even ‘work’ on our marriage. No activity is respectable for us unless described as a kind of work.

In Plato’s ideal regime of the *Republic*, all producers and merchants are completely excluded from the ruling class; the philosopher rulers, in turn, are forbidden from owning property, let alone engaging in commerce. Crafts, he says, degrade the soul and mutilate the body.[[28]](#endnote-28) In his “second-best” regime, the *Laws*, Plato permits citizens to own land, so long as they do not engage in manual labor or commerce, which degrade a “gentleman’s character.” Instead, all work should be done by wage-laborers or slaves.[[29]](#endnote-29) The citizens are gentleman farmers who lead lives of leisure, dedicated to athletic and military exercise as well as mental cultivation.[[30]](#endnote-30) They are strictly forbidden from practicing any craft or engaging in any commerce.[[31]](#endnote-31)

Aristotle follows Plato’s lead and is clear that in an ideal state, citizens would not work as artisans, laborers, or merchants. Such ways of life, he says, are ignoble and inimical to virtue. Manual labor debases the body, and commerce debases the soul.[[32]](#endnote-32) Citizens should also not work as farmers, who lack the leisure necessary for politics.[[33]](#endnote-33) Aristotle concedes that farmers are the best citizens of a democracy—a backhanded compliment, since he sees democracy as a corrupt regime—because farmers are economically independent and make good soldiers. Ironically, Aristotle also says that farmers make good democratic citizens because they are too busy to attend the Assembly, making them unlikely to join the urban mob.[[34]](#endnote-34) Ultimately, Aristotle lumps farmers with artisans and unskilled laborers as unfit for citizenship: they are conditions, not parts, of the polis.[[35]](#endnote-35)

Unlike ancient Egypt, in which one caste of people works, another caste fights, and a third caste governs, ancient Athenian citizens prided themselves on their ability to work, to fight, and to govern. Plato seems to reject this Athenian versatility when he proposes a caste hierarchy in the *Republic* wherein philosophers alone govern, auxiliaries alone fight, and workers alone produce. Unlike traditional caste societies, Plato’s castes are based on aptitude not birth. Through rigorous educational testing, the natural abilities of each student are identified and they are assigned to their proper caste.[[36]](#endnote-36) Plato explicitly anticipates that children of philosophers may well end up as producers and children of producers may end up as philosophers.[[37]](#endnote-37) Here we see the first meritocracy.

Plato not only divides his ideal society into functional castes, but he also divides workers into distinct occupations. Because, says Plato, each person has unique aptitudes, we quickly learn to specialize by making what we are naturally suited to make. We are all better off if we do what we are best suited to do, and exchange our goods and services with others. Moreover, if we focus on one task we are more likely to do it better than if we attempt to juggle several tasks, which makes us prone to miss the “opportune moment” (*kairos*) to act. If we are baking a cake while watching our kids, we might well burn the cake or neglect the kids. Plato defends the occupational division of labor on two grounds: first, that it takes advantage of natural differences in aptitude; second, that it helps to promote proper attention to the task at hand. This specialization, he says, enhances both the quantity and the quality of what we produce.[[38]](#endnote-38) In his famous defense of the division of labor, Adam Smith refers only to quantitative, not qualitative improvements.

Just as we don’t want a baker to try to make shoes, so we don’t want a producer to try to fight or govern. The harmony of the community depends on each person doing what they are best suited to do and not meddling in the affairs of others: let the cobbler stick to his last. Plato even goes so far as to define justice as the harmony of a society in which no one attempts to deprive another person of his or her rightful occupation.[[39]](#endnote-39) Plato also makes it clear that he is less concerned about bakers interfering with cobblers than he is about producers interfering with rulers. When craftsmen attempt to involve themselves in governing, the consequences are fatal to the community.[[40]](#endnote-40) Justice rests on each caste sticking to its own function.

Aristotle does not divide society into three castes, but he does divide all rational human activity into three kinds: production, action, and contemplation. These are also ranked: producing is the lowest kind of activity; it perfects the product, not the producer.[[41]](#endnote-41) The skill with which an artifact is made reveals nothing about the moral virtue of the producer. Even bad people can be good craftsmen; yet, says Aristotle, a bad person cannot be a good friend or a good philosopher. Acting and contemplating both perfect the agent; contemplation is more excellent than moral action because contemplation perfects the rational soul while action perfects the nonrational soul.

Each of these kinds of activities is governed by a distinctive kind of rational excellence: production is governed by craft (*technē*); action is governed by practical wisdom (*phronēsis*); contemplation is governed by theoretical wisdom (s*ophia*).[[42]](#endnote-42) Craft enables us to make things well; practical wisdom enables us to do things well; theoretical wisdom enables us to contemplate well.

In a sense, all these activities—making, doing, and contemplating—are kinds of work. When we say that an engine is “working,” we mean that it is functioning properly. The function of man is to exercise his rational powers of making well, doing well, and contemplating well.[[43]](#endnote-43) When we actualize our rational powers of craft, practical wisdom, and theoretical wisdom, we are doing the work proper to our rational human nature.[[44]](#endnote-44) Aristotle calls each of these three activities an *enērgeia*, a word which literally means “putting a power to work.” When Aristotle defines happiness as “an activity of the soul, in accordance with virtue,” he means actualizing our potential or putting our powers to work.[[45]](#endnote-45)

In English, we often contrast work with labor: a car engine works when functioning properly, but a car engine labors when it is not. Our work manifests our good function according to human nature, but our labor manifests toil and pain. Labor implies punishing exertion, as when we speak of someone being sentenced to “hard labor” or the infamous “*Arbeit macht frei*.” Aristotle associates painful, toilsome labor (*ponos*) with slavery, extreme athletic training, and Spartan military exercises.[[46]](#endnote-46) In all these cases, Aristotle claims that laborious exertion does not build character, but deforms the body. Unlike many Greeks, Aristotle does not admire the labors of Heracles. And indeed, a life devoted to heavy labor does usually deform one’s body.

Aristotle goes further: any “paid employment,” he says, “degrades the mind.”[[47]](#endnote-47) Why? Because it is inherently degrading to pursue activities solely for the sake of money. Modern psychologists have demonstrated that offering a reward to a child for, say, reading, undermines a child’s enjoyment of reading and desire to read. In this sense, working for money does degrade the mind by weakening our enjoyment of the pleasures intrinsic to various activities. Aristotle himself recommends pursuing occupation, including politics, for the sake of leisure. We might well ask him: Is it worse to work for money than for leisure?

Aristotle distinguishes leisure from recreation. All work, he says, involves some degree of toilsome labor, which is why we need time to “re-create” our energies for work. We cannot work incessantly; recreation is a necessary counterpart of work. Recreation, says Aristotle, is medicine to treat the damaging effects of occupational labor.[[48]](#endnote-48) Only leisure activities are truly free of the constraints of work.

The superiority of leisure over production is evident, says Aristotle, even in the history of technology. The inventors of crafts used in recreation are more honored, he says, than the inventors of crafts used in production, because what is freely chosen is superior to necessity. On this view, then, inventing techniques for the enjoyment of free time is better than inventing productive technologies: the Xbox is better than the MacBook.

**The Reflective Practitioner**

Aristotle distinguishes two stages or aspects of production: first we conceive a task (*noiēsis*) and then we execute it (*poiēsis*).[[49]](#endnote-49) The unity of thought and action is what distinguishes human production from the activities of other animals. Birds might be better architects, and beavers might be better engineers, but only humans erect their projects in thought before executing them in practice. At the same time, human beings are the only animals who can separate conception from execution by delegating the productive work to another person. No bird ever enlisted another bird to build her nest.

Aristotle is aware, of course, that humans often separate conception from execution. The master builder conceives while the manual laborer executes; or the master conceives while the slave executes.[[50]](#endnote-50) This pervasive separation of conception and execution helps to explain why Plato and Aristotle praise craftsmanship but denigrate craftsmen: they praise the knowledge of the master-builder but despise the drudgery of the wage-slave.

When people condemn modern industry for degrading work into monotonous routines, what they attack is not specialization but the separation of conception from execution. What makes jobs meaningless, dull, repetitive, and oppressive is that the person doing them had no role in designing the task. Workers are reduced to hired ‘hands,’ though we must not confuse the separation of conception from execution with the separation of mind from hand. Purely mental work can also be divided between managers who conceive and workers who execute, as when lawyers task paralegals with research projects.

Work has dignity only to the extent that workers share in both the conception and execution of their tasks.[[51]](#endnote-51) Aristotle concedes that if manual labor involved a love of skill and learning, it could become an activity worthy of a freeman.[[52]](#endnote-52) The challenge Plato and Aristotle pose to us is how to structure ordinary work so that it offers opportunities for liberal learning: that is, how to educate people to become reflective practitioners.[[53]](#endnote-53) Only then will work become worthy of workers, and the dance inseparable from the dancer.

1. In the poem “Among School Children,” *ad finem*. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. On philosophers as craftsmen of the virtues, see *Republic* 500d. On ruling as the royal craft (*technē basilikē*), see *Statesman* 259b. On a ruler as a craftsman (*dēmiourgos*), see *Republic* 395c, 500d. On ruling as a *technē*, see *Republic* 488e. For an argument that ruling both is and is not a craft in Plato, see Michael B. Foster, *The Political Philosophies of Plato and Hegel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935). [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. On Plato and Aristotle in histories of economic thought, see M.L.W. Laistner, *Greek Economics* (London: Dent, 1923); Joseph Schumpeter, *History of Economic Analysis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954); Karl Pribram, *A History of Economic Reasoning* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983). On Plato’s economics, see Michael B. Foster, *The Political Philosophies of Plato and Hegel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968); Gabriel Danzig et al. eds, *Plato and Xenophon: Comparative Studies* (Boston: Brill, 2018); Karl Popper and E.H. Gombrich, *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020). On Aristotle’s economics, see Scott Meikle, *Aristotle’s Economic Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Ricardo F. Crespo, *A Re-Assessment of Aristotle’s Economic Thought* (New York: Routledge, 2013). [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. On crafts in Plato, see R.G. Collingwood, “Plato’s Philosophy of Art,” *Mind* 34 (134) 1925: 154-172; Christopher Janaway, “Arts and Crafts in Plato and Collingwood,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 50 (1) 1992: 45-54. On the dignity and degradation of work in Plato and Aristotle, see my *The Moral Economy of Labor: Aristotelian Themes in Economic Theory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993). [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Plato often uses the terms *technē* and *epistēmē* interchangeably: craftsmanship is a form of knowledge, see *Statesman* 259e–260a; *Laws* 890d and 892b; *Protagoras* 357b; *Phaedrus* 260e; *Gorgias* 500e–501b. On *epistēmē* *basilikē*,see *Statesman* 292b, 292e – 293a and 295b. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. On how a true craftsman must look to the forms, see *Republic* 596b–597b; cf. *Gorgias* 503e–504a. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. On craft as scientific knowledge, see Plato, *Republic*, 340d-e; Aristotle, NE 1139b 15; *Metaphysics* 981a 15 to 981b 9. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. *Republic* 596-597. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. *Metaphysics* 981a 24-26. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. *Metaphysics* 981b 8. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. *Apology* 22d-e. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. *Apology* 22b; cf. *Ion* 533-534. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. See Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938), 15-41. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. “No other craft seeks its own advantage . . . but the advantage of that of which it is the craft” (*Republic* 342c-e); cf. *Statesman* 296e–297b. On how crafts secure genuine human goods, see *Gorgias* 464b – 466b. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. On teaching as a *technē*, see *Republic* 518d. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. On judging whether to treat an illness, see *Republic* 407a-e; cf. *Laches* 195c-d. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. *Gorgias* 462-463. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. *Laws* 938a. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Here I draw on Collingwood’s classic analysis of craft in *The Principles of Art*, 15-16. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Yet, in *Lesser Hippias*, Plato seems to argue that a craft can be used for good or ill (367a-e). In *Republic*, Plato distinguishes the person from the craftsman: *qua* craftsman, the shepherd cares only for her sheep, but *qua* person (e.g., money-maker) the shepherd might care for herself alone (345b-e). A person might use a craft for good or ill, but a craftsman uses her craft only for the good of those served by the craft. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. *Nicomachean Ethics* 1139b 16-18. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. *Nicomachean Ethics,* 1140b 22. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. *Metaphysics* 1046b 7. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. *Republic* 343b. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. *Republic* 345c*.* [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. *Republic* 346e. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. *Republic* 347a-b. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Plato, *Republic* 495d. All citations of Plato are from *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1997). [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. See Plato, *Laws* 741d-e, 743c-d. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. Plato, *Laws* 806e – 807e. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. Plato, *Laws* 846d-e and 919d. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. See Aristotle, *Politics* 1337b 10-14. All citations of Aristotle are from *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 7, chap. 9. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 6, chap. 4. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. Aristotle, *Politics* 1278a 1-5. Aristotle also includes farmers as mere “conditions” of the polis, at *Politics* 1329a 35-36. Aristotle excludes farmers and artisans from the priesthood, at *Politics* 1329a 27-28. He says that the best kinds of states would not admit artisans as citizens, at *Politics* 1278a 8; cf. 1328b 38-40. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. *Republic* 413e – 414a. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. *Republic* 415b-c. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. *Republic* 370c. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. *Republic* 434a. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. *Republic* 434a-c. [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. *Nicomachean Ethics* 1094a 5. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. For this scheme, see *Nicomachean Ethics* 1178b 20; 1140a 1; *Topics* 145a 15; *Metaphysics* 1025b 25; 1064a 16. [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. *Metaphysics* 1045b19. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. On the *ergon* or work of man, see *Nicomachean Ethics* 1097b 25-32 and 1098a 7. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. *Nicomachean Ethics* 1098a 15. [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. See *Politics* 1252a 31-34, 1334a 20-24, 1337b 38, 1338b 9-14, 1339a 7-11, 1339b 16-17. [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. *Politics* 1337b 10-15. [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. *Politics* 1337b 36-42. [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. “Of productions and movements one part is called thinking and the other making” (*Metaphysics* 1032b 15). [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. *Metaphysics* 981a 30-31; *Politics* 1254a 5. [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. For a book-length argument to this effect, see my *The Moral Economy of Labor: Aristotelian Themes in Economic Theory*. [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. Aristotle, *Politics* 1337b 15-20. [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
53. On the ideal of the “reflective practitioner,” see Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Basic Books, 1983). [↑](#endnote-ref-53)