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Žižekian Ideology and the 'Sympathetic' Slave-Owner: Ostensible Necessity of Slavery in *Our Nig* and *Minnie's Sacrifice*

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Abstract: I will look at and discuss the ideological-subject position of the 'sympathetic' slave-owner by employing Žižek's specific conception of ideology across two varying slave-narratives. I attempt to uncover how this ideology operates within the social-material reality in the texts Our Nig and Minnie's Sacrifice and the ways that the authors (Harper and Wilson) employed tropes in depicting this particular archetypal figure in slave-narratives. These charachter's exhibit an ideology remarkably aligned with Žižek's: that a certain non-knowledge of the proper logic of an ideological reality is what sustains it. This suggests not only that such an archetypal figure exists across slave-narratives, but also that they deploy a communal ideology that attempts to conflate unwillingness with inability. They enable the perpetuation of the institution by their unwillingness to reject the economic benefits of slavery, which they conceive of as an inability.

Keywords: Žižek, Slavery; African-American Literature

“Mammy, we couldn't spare you. And besides, it is so cold in the North, you would freeze to death.”—Minnie’s Sacrifice, Frances Harper

Introduction

Slave-narratives, fictional and autobiographical, are textual sites of survival and condemnation, they depict the reprehensible nature of slavery, and the humans that endured the torment of being owned by another. They justly condemn the slave-owner, and their contorted and non-sensible logic of racial superiority (this superiority-complex implicitly rendering another race inferior). The ideology of slavery, put simply, would be: ‘black bodies are commodities, they are meant to be bought and sold and cannot operate in our society without an owner, due to their inherent inferiority’. These texts also often contain a character who occupies the role of ‘sympathetic’ slave owner and denies, or shifts, this logic and is seemingly sympathetic to the plight of the slave but still sustains the institution of slavery through their actions and overall complicity.

The two texts I will be examining are *Our Nig* and *Minnie’s Sacrifice*. They both were published in the 19th century around the time of the Civil War and written by African-American women. Both of these texts deal with the subjugation of black people in America at the time of slavery, but they approach these topics from vastly different positionalities. *Our Nig* was the first published novel to be written by an African-American woman and takes places in the north and is semi-autobiographical. The protagonist, Frado, is not a slave, but rather an indentured servant that is representative of the author herself, Harriet Wilson. *Minnie’s Sacrifice* is a fictional work that takes place in the South, where the protagonists are indeed born slaves. These differences present points of contention between the texts due to their dissimilar settings and characters, yet they share three archetypal characters for slave-narratives: the subjugated black people (slaves or indentured servants), the slave-owners or ‘masters’ operating in the traditional ideology of slavery (these are characters which are normally depicted as cruel), and the ‘sympathetic’ slave-owner whose ideology varies from the bigoted ideology of the ordinary slave-owner (usually depicted more ambiguously).

Ideology is sometimes conceived of as a false perception that conceals the ‘truth’ of empirical reality (as if there was some non-ideological reality) but for this essay, I will be employing Slavoj Žižek’s conception of ideology. For Žižek, ideology is instead present in material reality. As he says: “ideology is not simply a ‘false consciousness’, an illusory

representation of reality, it is rather this reality itself which is already to be conceived of as 'ideological'-- 'ideological' is a social reality whose very existence implies the non-knowledge of its participants as to its essence" (Žižek 1989: 15). Ideology thus constitutes real social relations. I will call this social-material reality that is constituted by ideology, 'ideological reality'. If one becomes aware of 'ideological reality' they are not awakened to see a new reality, but rather see the ideology that constitutes real social relations: "individuals partaking in it are not aware of its proper logic; that is, a kind of reality whose very ontological consistency implies a certain non-knowledge of it's participants" (1989: 15). There is thus a 'non-knowing' inherent in any ideological system that severs the participant from seeing the real social relations that maintains the ideological reality. As Petar Ramadanovic says in his article on Žižek's concept of ideology: "Ideology functions in a twofold way, not only promulgating a system of values but doing so in ways whose effectiveness depends on the concealment of its content" (Ramadanovic 2014: 126). There is not a false reality, but rather a material-social reality that is informed by ideology, an 'ideological reality'. And an 'ideological reality' always presents itself as an alternative-less imperative; an 'ideological reality' is seen by its contemporaneous participants as the only viable system (whether that be economic or social).

This idea is corroborated by social scientists Jeffrey D. Grynaviski and Michael C. Munger who have stated that the ideology of racism "reified bigotry" (Grynaviski 144: 2017) by developing institutions that made those racist beliefs of inferiority a reality, "blacks were forced into servitude, denied education, and prevented from using the social and cultural capital of the family" (2017: 144). And this served two distinct but co-dependent purposes: "First, the ideology of racism served a legal-economic purpose" (Grynaviski 2017: 145) and second, "the ideology of racism allowed slave owners to live with the contradiction between owning slaves and seeing themselves as Christian" (Grynaviski 2017: 145). This is possible because their ideology produced the social-material reality of black people.

The ordinary conception of ideology denies the presence of the ideology within the material conditions of reality, but as we've seen, slavery was not an illusory reality, but rather an ideological-material reality. In short, an 'ideological reality'. The ideology of slavery sustained the material reality of slavery. This is easily applicable to the archetypal cruel slave-owner who abides by the bigoted logic of racism and the racialized hierarchy: they are able to see themselves as good because their beliefs are adopted by institutions that in turn reify their beliefs. They are able to evade self- or even social-condemnation because of the 'truth' of racial inferiority. But this is complicated in the case of the 'sympathetic' slave-owner, such as Mr. Le

Grange and Mr. Le Croix in *Minnie's Sacrifice* and Mr. Bellmont, James and the Aunt in *Our Nig*, who are ostensibly sympathetic to the plight of the slave, yet deploy economic or labor-centric arguments for why they cannot free all, or any, of their slaves. All of these 'sympathetic' slave-owners are depicted as operating in a liminal position of 'caring for' particular slaves while upholding and sustaining the institution of slavery, they are neither functioning according to the ideology of the traditional slave-owner nor abolitionist, but rather have their own ideological-subject position (which the white slave-owners benefit from).

I will look at and discuss this ideological-subject position of the 'sympathetic' slave-owner and see the ways that Harper and Wilson employed tropes in depicting this particular archetypal figure in slave-narratives, and how they functioned within the texts. This suggests not only that such an archetypal figure exists across slave-narratives, but also that they deploy a communal ideology that attempts to conflate unwillingness with inability. They enable the perpetuation of the institution by their unwillingness to reject the economic benefits of slavery, which they conceive of as an inability to do so. I will use Žižek's specific conception of ideology to help uncover how this ideology operates within the social-material reality of slavery within the texts.

The 'Simple' Ideology of Slavery

The abhorrent logic of slavery is clearly delineated in both of these texts, and it finds representation in the cruel slave-owners, and their ideological beliefs regarding slavery. It is a simple equation of racial hierarchization that is then reified by the institution of slavery itself that deprives black people of education, a proper social standing and even their autonomy. And both of these texts make appeals to the humanity of the slave-subject, which is something I will return to later. In *Minnie's Sacrifice* there is an explicit scene of the Northerner that houses Minnie, Timonthy Carpenter, discussing the South, where he aptly expresses the 'simple' ideology of slavery:

> [Slavery in the south is] a prejudice which virtually says you are down, and I mean to keep you down. As a servant I tolerate you; you are useful as you are valuable, but rise one step in the scale of being, and I am ready to put you down. I see this in the treatment that the free colored people receive in parts of the South; they seem to me to be the outcasts of an outcast race. They are denied the right to walk in certain public places accessible to every class unless they go as nurses. (Harper 1869: chapter 6)

This passage is an example of the simple ideology of slavery for the non-'sympathetic' slave-owner. They believe that black people are nothing but commodities and should not occupy any other subject-position other than subjugated servitude. This ideology, like the 'sympathetic' slave-owner's ideology that will be explored later, sustains the ideological reality of slavery. They are ready to "put [sic] down" any black person that attempts to deny the ideological reality of slavery and construct a new reality, even a simple gesture such as freely walking is denied, "[free blacks] are denied the right to walk in certain public spaces available to all classes". The 'non-sympathetic' slave-owner will "tolerate" (Harper 1869: chapter 6) black people only in their servant positions; the conviction is predicated on the inferiority of black people and that they are inherently less than in relation to white people. This is a simple and direct expression of bigoted racism that slavery depends on to reproduce itself.

Our Nig depicts the 'simple' slave-owners ideology but in its Northern incarnation. The subtitle to the book implies the transitive nature of the ideology of slave owner's, from the South to the North, stating, "Slavery's Shadows Falls Even There [in the North]". Slavery's ideology (or it's 'shadow'), that is ordinarily conceived of as confined to the south, has appeared in the North, and the content of Wilson's book vindicates that sentiment. Albeit the North does not participate in the act of owning another human, the ideology of slavery is still present; the absence of slavery does not omit the ideology of slavery. Lois Leveen claims that *Our Nig* is indicative of the pervasiveness of the slave-owner logic in America, even in the North. He asserts that: "The model home for American society is built according to the spatial imperatives of slavery" (Leveen 2001: 562) and that "slavery's shadows, the narrative implies, will continue to fall [sic] in the north during slavery" (2001: 562). The entire title of the book is: "*Our Nig; Or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black, in a White Two-Story House, North Showing that Slavery's Shadow Falls Even There".* The main character, Frado, is abandoned by her mother and left with a white family, the Belmont's, and while some characters are seemingly sympathetic to her plight and seek to give her freedom, others, such as Ms. Belmont and her daughter Mary, act as cruel slave-owners that clearly are operating according to the 'simple' ideology of slavery. Mary exhibits her disdain for black people as soon as she hears about Frado being deposited at their household by her mother, saying, "I don't want a n----- 'round ME, do you, mother?" (Wilson 1859: chapter 3). Then her mom states that she see's utility in having a black-servant (adhering to the 'simple' ideology of slave-owner by viewing African-American's in their utility as servant-position) saying, "I don't mind the n----- in the child. I should like a dozen better than one,' replied her mother. 'If I could make her do my work in a few years, I would keep her. I have so much trouble with girls I hire, I am almost persuaded if I have one to train up in my way from a

child, I shall be able to keep them awhile. I am tired of changing every few months" (Wilson 1859: chapter 3).

The way they speak to her throughout the text is indicative of the cruelty of the slave-owner, even if it's indentured servitude in the North. The words Mary and Mrs. Bellmont use to characterize Frado performing her labor, namely "lazy" (1859: chapter 6), and the way they deploy language against her in general. They "chide" (1859: chapter 6) her and "threaten" (1859: chapter 6) her and are "impatient" (1859: chapter 6) with her and "command" (1859: chapter 6) things of her. This language reveals the cruelty of the slave-owner. David Dowling posits that this is a result of the greed of utilization; Mrs. Belmont is cruel because cruelty will extract more value from Frado. Dowling writes: "Greed also drives Mrs. Belmont: 'I'll beat the money out of her, if I can't get her worth any other way' [1859: Chapter 8]. Greed seems to fuel not only violence, but also anger in these scenes, directed specifically at the child workers' failure to realize their productivity as capital investments" (Dowling 2009: 130).

Subsequent to Frado's arrival to the household, the Belmont's develop a dependence on her labor. By fourteen, she is already doing all of the domestic labor needed to maintain the Belmont household:

> She was now able to do all the washing, ironing, baking, and the common et cetera of household duties, though but fourteen. Mary left all for her to do, though she affected great responsibility. She would show herself in the kitchen long enough to relieve herself of some command, better withheld; or insist upon some compliance to her wishes in some department which she was very imperfectly acquainted with, very much less than the person she was addressing (Wilson 1859: chapter 6).

This passage further discloses Frado's proficiency as a worker, particularly as a young worker, as the text says: "She was now able to do all the washing, ironing, baking, and the common et cetera of household duties, though but fourteen" (Wilson 1859: chapter 6). This discloses the Belmont's reliance on Frado's labor as well as their own daughter's inability to perform the work. Frado's competence as a worker is also displayed in relation to the white family's daughter, Mary's incompetence, as she "was very imperfectly acquainted with" certain tasks throughout the house, "very much less than [Frado]". This is done throughout the narrative, Frado positions her own labor as valuable and her claims of the value of her labor is accompanied by her stating her age. As Xiomara Santamarina states: "[*Our Nig]* refuses [sic] to collude in the devaluations of black labor at work in the nation's simultaneous disparagement and exploitation of black

menial workers" (Santamarina 2005: 64). She is essentially asserting the value of her labor specifically done by a very young girl. She at one point within the text states what she did at seven, even going as far to mention the word "indispensable": "her labors were multiplied; she was quite indispensable, although but seven years old" (chapter 3). Here, Frado (the indentured servant as slave) is viewed by the cruel slave-owner—Mrs. Belmont—purely as utility in the form of domesticated labor, relieving her daughter and herself of these tasks.

The 'simple' slave-owners ideology is explicit and is not sympathetic to the plight of the slave, because they view them as racially inferior and as fulfilling their subject-position as slaves or servants. In the instance of Ms. Belmont, there is a plain and direct correlation between the ideology—the utility of having an indentured servant or slave—and the ideological reality, which was the system of slavery or indentured servitude of black people that Frado's labor is indicative of. The ideology of the cruel slave-owner that views black people purely in terms of labor-utility, establishes the reality of the subjugation of a black person, even in the North.

The Ideology of the 'Sympathetic' Slave-Owner

The 'sympathetic' slave-owner has a dual function in the text: they are a realistic depiction of many slave-owners who wanted to see themselves as good. They could even potentially be perceived as symbols of incrementalism, of gradual change to the way African-Americans are viewed. Melanie C. Green, Kaitlin Fitzgerald, and Melissa M. Moore propose in their article on the psychological function of archetypes in fiction that representations of characters with a sympathetic disposition to disenfranchised groups may lead to greater public acceptance: "Narratives can also help create new images (or stereotypes) of social groups, which can lead to social change... the sympathetic characters in the novel Uncle Tom's Cabin inspired antislavery sentiment" (Green 2009: 101). Yet, these characters could also be interpreted as a symbol of complicity, and the identity of the authors, as African-American women during slavery and post-reconstruction, lends itself even further to this argument. All of the 'sympathetic' characters across these texts, Mr. Le Grange, Mr. Le Croix, Mr. Belmont, James, and the Aunt, are the ones that maintain the institution of slavery, regardless of the fact that Mr. Le Grange and Mr. Le Croix emancipated Louis and Minnie. There are alternatives to the ideological reality of slavery, such as wage-labor, that renders slavery not an economic necessity, but rather an ideologically contingent economic structure.

There is a passage from *Minnie's Sacrifice* that encapsulates the 'sympathetic' slave-owner's logic:

> It is the best thing I can do...I just tell you what I'll do, Ellen. I'll take the child down to New Orleans, and make out to Georgiette that I am going to sell her, but instead of that, I'll get a friend of mine who is going to Pennsylvania to take her with him, and have her boarded there, and educated. Nobody need know anything about her being colored. I'd send you both, Ellen, but, to tell you the truth, the plantation is running down, and the crops are so short this year I can't afford it; but when times get better, I'll send you up there and tell you where you can find her (Harper 1869: chapter 4).

In the passage, Mr. Le Grange discloses his rationale for separating Ellen from Minnie: he is willing to send away Minnie to evade the brutality of Georgiette (his wife), but he is not willing to allow Ellen, Minnie's slave-mother, to accompany her. He candidly tells her, "the plantation is running down, and the crops are so short this year I can't afford it; but when times get better, I'll send you up there and tell you where you can find her" (1869: Chapter 4). Mr. Le Grange states that he is financially prohibited from sending Ellen to freedom with her daughter; he is sympathetic to her plight as a slave, yet is unwilling to free her. But this unwillingness operates under a guise of economic necessity, he deploys an argument that conflates unwillingness, with inability. This delineates the ideology of the 'sympathetic' slave-holder: 'I deplore the institution of slavery, and I would set you free, if I wasn't economically compelled to keep you'. This ideological position sustained the institution of slavery itself. So, the conflation of *unwillingness* with *inability* is what allows the false liminal-textual space of Mr. Le Grange as concurrently slave-holder and sympathetic to the plights of slaves to exist. Mr. Le Grange cites the material reality of slavery, under the guise of economic necessity, as the reason that he cannot allow Ellen to leave.

Albeit Mr. Le Grange and Mr. Le Croix both free the slaves that are the main protagonists of the text, they refuse to free their other remaining slaves—it is even stated within the text that Mr. Le Croix has "500 slaves" (1869: chapter 2)—and the reasons they free the specific slaves, Minnie and Louis, is for racialized and paternal reasons, since both Minnie and Louis are light-skinned (passable as white) and because they are both children of the slave-owners that free them.

An extremely similar situation to the one found is *Minnie's Sacrifice* with Mr. Le Croix's refusal to free Ellen (for ostensibly economic reasons) materializes in *Our Nig* and is made

evident in chapter 7, when the Belmont's son, James, says that he intends to free their indentured servant Frado:

> I assured her that mother's views were by no means general; that in our part of the country there were thousands upon thousands who favored the elevation of her race, disapproving of oppression in all its forms; that she was not unpitied, friendless, and utterly despised; that she might hope for better things in the future. Having spoken these words of comfort, I rose with the resolution that if I recovered my health I would take her home with me, whether mother was willing or not (Wilson 1859: chapter 7).

The Aunt then responds: "I don't know what your mother would do without her; still, I wish she was away" (Wilson 1859: chapter 7). Here James is speaking very fondly of Frado, saying that many people "favored the elevation of her race" and that they disapproved "of oppression in all its forms". He positions his views, and the view of many northerners, in opposition to his own mother's views (that entail cruelty and degradation of African-Americans), the "thousands upon thousands" likely being representative of those in the north. Although it is evident throughout that the family has a reliance and dependence on Frado's labor, in this moment it is explicitly stated that the family doesn't "know what [Mrs. B] would do without [Frado]". James and the Aunt, are deploying the exact same argument as Mr. Le Grange, an argument that conflates unwillingness with inability. This passage reveals the interesting dynamic of even those sympathetic to the plight of Frado: they ostensibly want her to be free and to avoid suffering and the cruelty of Mrs. B, but they concurrently recognize the economic and labor-reliance that their family has on Frado. She is effectively indispensable; she is considered a commodity or service that cannot be parted with. This is the strange place where the value of her labor and her status of indentured servant intersect: the value of her labor is the very thing that the family cites as their rationale for keeping her subjugated to them. She indeed is valuable as a competent and proficient house-worker, but this very value renders her indispensable as a servant.

The ultimate example of this compassion for the plight of the slave and unwillingness to free said slave dichotomy, comes in *Minnie's Sacrifice* when Camila finds Mammy (the grandmother of Louise) with baby Louise. After commenting how (passably) white the baby is with "beautiful blue" (Harper 1869: chapter 1) eyes, she says that "it is a shame for him to be a slave" (1869: chapter 1). Then, immediately starts devising a plan that mirrors the biblical story of Moses, to free baby Louise from slavery, and to raise him as her brother. But she tells Mammy that while she would free both Louise and his mother if she was alive, she can't free Mammy, saying: "Mammy, we couldn't spare you. And besides, it is so cold in the North, you

would freeze to death" (1869: chapter 1). This single sentence exhibits all of the tenants of the ideology of the 'sympathetic' slave-owner: the conflation of unwillingness with inability ("we couldn't"), the economic necessity of slavery ("couldn't spare you"), and, of course, the compassion for the plight of the slave and their well-being ("it is so cold in the North, you would freeze to death"). This ideology of compassion, Camila's desire for Mammy to not "freeze to death", conjoined with the ostensible economic necessity of slavery, is what keeps Mammy subjugated as a slave.

All of the 'sympathetic' slave-owner's exhibit a certain 'non-knowing' of the system of slavery (or in the case of the characters from *Our Nig,* indentured servitude) that they participate in and perpetuate. This 'non-knowing' is inherent and constitutive of their liminal position as 'sympathetic' slave-owners; it establishes their identity and is among the tropes that have been identified in the archetypical 'sympathetic' slaveowner character.

There is a moment in *Minnie's Sacrifice,* after Mr. Le Croix and his daughter, Camila, attend a meeting by a black, formerly enslaved, abolitionist, where this non-knowledge is made clear, at the end of meeting even though Mr. Le Croix, "felt a sense of guilt (Harper 1869: chapter 2), he ultimately ends up saying to his daughter: "Birdie, I am sorry that we attended that meeting this morning. I didn't believe a word that n---- said; and yet these people all drank it down as if every word were gospel truth. They are a set of fanatics, calculated to keep the nation in hot water. I hope that you will never enter such a place again. Did you believe one word that negro said?" (Harper 1869: chapter 2). Yet, his daughter has an entirely different experience: "What she had seen of slavery in the South had awakened her sympathy and compassion. What she had heard of it in the North had aroused her sense of justice. She had seen the old system under a new light. The good seed was planted, which was yet to yield its harvest of blessed deeds" (1869: chapter 2).

There is a large distinction in the way that each character receives the lecture: Mr. Le Croix has "vexation" and feels "guilt". While his daughter, Camila, is "awakened" and the scene aroused "compassion" in her. This produces the binary of illumination/ concealed guilt that erects the concept of 'non-knowledge'. All of Camila's descriptors are indicative of illumination while her fathers are indicative of rejection or a darkness (his brow "grew darker" as he tried to conceal his frustration). The way they each conceive of the scene is different: Mr. Le Croix considers the audience members as "fanatics" while his daughter never expresses the same conception of the crowd and instead relates it to a story told to her by one of their slaves. This is an instance of Mr. Le Croix being confronted with the brutal truth of slavery that doesn't operate

within the ostensible economic necessity of slavery. The story of the former slave leaves an "impression" on him and leads to "vexation" yet he dismisses his daughter's reaction. His daughter on the other hand, experiences an awakening or an illumination that brings about "sympathy and compassion". This reveals that, for the 'sympathetic' slave-holder, it is not that they are not aware of the truth of the brutality of slavery, but rather that they dismiss the reality (and thus the brutality) of slavery and exchange it with the economic necessity of slavery. They do not accept and recognize the brutality of the institution that they participate in, rather engaging in a kind of non-knowing dissonance, as exhibited by Mr. Le Croix.

There is a passage in which Minnie mentions this non-knowledge while talking specifically about Louis, prior to finding out that he is black. Which is still applicable to 'sympathetic' slave-owners (especially because Louis may himself be a slave-holder, since he inherited 'property' when Mr. Le Croix died). Minnie says that Louis needs to see the "true light" (Harper 1869: chapter 9) to understand the brutality of slavery and says that his "reflective faculties are hardly fully awakened" (1869: chapter 9). Minnie is here asserting an idea that is remarkably aligned with Žižek's: that a certain non-knowledge of the proper logic of an ideological reality is what sustains it. Minnie is stating that those that support slavery have not "looked deeper than the surface of slavery" (1869: chapter 9), that they are essentially unaware of not only the reprehensible reality of slavery, but of the ideological logic beneath it, below the "surface of slavery" (1869: chapter 9). It's not that Louis' ideology presents a false-reality, his ideology is actually incorporated into the reality of slavery, rather he does not see the logic of his ideology that slavery operates in. In the above quote he is simply abiding by the material-social reality of slavery. If the 'sympathetic' slave-owner did as Minnie says and "looked deeper than the surface of slavery" and thus sees "the true light" of the logic of slavery (that enables the material reality of slaver), then they would cease to be slave-owners and would be truly sympathetic former slave-owners.

Conclusion: **The Pervasiveness of Ideology**

'Sympathetic' slave-owners can be seen across autobiographical and fictional narratives such as *Our Nig* and *Minnie's Sacrifice,* and can even be seen in the North and in the South. The disparities and dissimilar positionalities that exists between these texts demonstrates the pervasiveness of this archetypical character and their accompanying ideology across African-American slavery literature. Further, the same tropes and logic is applicable to the 'sympathetic'

slave owners across both of these texts: the trope of conflating unwillingness with inability; the trope of reliance on the labor of the slave / the economic necessity of slavery; the non-knowledge of the proper logic of the ideology and material reality of slavery; and the sympathy with the plight of the slave in conjunction with all of the previously listed tropes. All of these things are aligned with and applicable to Žižek's concept of ideology as an all-pervasive force that sustains the material reality of that ideology, producing an ideological reality.

Slavery was an ideological reality sustained by many different ideologies, and out of the main two most frequently depicted in African-American literature (the 'simple' ideology and the 'sympathetic' ideology), the 'sympathetic' ideology could be perceived as an even more dangerous and manipulative ideology, operating as if they care for slaves, while concurrently keeping them enslaved. As Slavoj Žižek has stated (albeit while talking about the exploitation of workers, yet, it is still very applicable to the power differential of slavery): "If you have a boss who is up there, the old-fashioned boss shouting at you, exerting full brutal authority. In a way it's much easier to rebel than to have a friendly boss who embraces you... The problem is this not only covers up the actual relationship of power but makes it even more impenetrable" (2020: unpaginated). The ideology of the 'sympathetic' slave-owner operates in the same way: it conceals the power that the slave-owner has over the slave, rendering it a more insidious form of slavery.

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