This is a book about the legacy of ancient slavery in the modern world. It is also a book that sets out to be an appeal for ‘ending slavery in all its variations, in the present and in the future’. With this aim, Page duBois covers examples of the reality of enslavement in the modern world up to our own day, the interrelationship of racial discrimination and servile exploitation, ancient ideologies and realities of slavery, as well as the modern cinematic reception of ancient slaves and slave systems. The author’s aim is to be praised; its execution less so.

The book covers a wide range of issues – too wide perhaps for an author not familiar with most of the evidence. The book is of course addressed to a general audience; but this should not serve as an excuse for superficial reading, sloppy writing, and weak mastery of the source material. There is a distinct echo here in the author’s criticism of Aristotle’s argument in his *Politics*: ‘its somewhat rambling, disjointed shape’, writes duBois, ‘may derive from its source as lecture notes’.

Even within its own remit, the book fails to provide a coherent account of the legacy of ancient slavery; much – if not most – ends up as a retelling of the main (ancient) literary tradition on slavery – written by those who were (destined to be) masters. Perhaps it is in this aspect – the continuation of the master narrative – that the book represents the most striking example of the legacy of ancient slavery: the world the slaves made – the ideologies, attitudes and ethics, in the world of work, family or elsewhere, which have left a lasting legacy, too – is once more left out of the story. Plus ça change?