

NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS

PLATO AND ARISTOTLE: εὐδαιμονία, ἔξις OR ἐνέργεια?

In this paper I should like to discuss various passages relevant to the Platonic and Aristotelian definitions of εὐδαιμονία. First among these are the following:

Plato *Philebus* 11D4–6:

‘Ὡς νῦν ἡμῶν ἑκάτερος ἔξιν ψυχῆς καὶ διάθεσιν ἀποφαίνειν τινὰ ἐπιχειρήσει τὴν δυναμένην ἀνθρώποις πᾶσι τὸν βίον εὐδαίμονα παρέχειν.

Clement of Alexandria *Stromateis* 2. 21–22, p. 500 (Potter):

Σπεύσιππος τε ὁ Πλάτωνος ἀδελφιδοῦς τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν φησὶν ἔξιν εἶναι τελείαν ἐν τοῖς κατὰ φύσιν ἔχουσιν, ἢ ἔξιν ἀγαθῶν . . . Ξενοκράτης τε ὁ Καλχηδόνιος τὴν εὐδαιμονίαν ἀποδίδωσι κτήσιν τῆς οἰκείας ἀρετῆς καὶ τῆς ὑπηρετικῆς αὐτῇ δυνάμει.

Aristotle *Ethica Nicomachea* 1. 8, 1098b31–1099a3: διαφέρει δὲ ἴσως οὐ μικρὸν ἐν κτήσιν ἢ χρήσιν τὸ ἀριστον ὑπολαμβάνειν, καὶ ἐν ἔξιν ἢ ἐνέργειᾳ. τὴν μὲν γὰρ ἔξιν ἐνδέχεται μηδὲν ἀγαθὸν ἀποτελεῖν ὑπάρχουσιν, οἷον τῷ καθεύδοντι ἢ καὶ ἄλλως πως ἐξηγηκῶς, τὴν δ’ ἐνέργειαν οὐχ οἷον τε πράξει γὰρ ἐξ ἀνάγκης, καὶ εὐ πράξει.¹

By insisting that εὐδαιμονία is not a possession or state (a κτήσις or ἔξις) but rather an exercise or activity (a χρήσις or ἐνέργεια), Aristotle quite clearly parts company with Speusippos and Xenocrates (assuming, of course, that their views are correctly expressed by Clement). But he does not part company with Plato. R. A. Gauthier and J. Y. Jolif² have shown: (1) that Plato’s εὐδαιμονία is an activity; (2) that his ἔξις is equivalent to Aristotle’s χρήσις; and (3) that Aristotle is aware of (1) and (2).

But Gauthier and Jolif weaken the force of their own demonstration. They argue that “la précision avec laquelle Aristote distingue du vocabulaire platonicien son propre vocabulaire ne permet pas de lui attribuer une méprise sur ce point; mais il a pu reprocher à Platon, même si théoriquement il le faisait

consister dans l’usage, d’avoir *pratiquement* traité le bonheur comme une possession.”³ Furthermore, they overlook the ultimate point which is implied by (1), (2), and (3), namely, (4) that it is Plato’s distinction between κτήσις and χρήσις (or between κτήσις and ἔξις) which is the source of Aristotle’s distinction between ἔξις and ἐνέργεια and, quite probably, between δύναμις and ἐνέργεια. In this paper I wish to establish the truth of (4). Before doing this, however, it will be necessary to review briefly the evidence which establishes the truth of (1), (2), and (3).

(1) In *Philebus* 11D Plato does not *define* the βίος εὐδαίμων as a ἔξις. In fact, he seems to suggest that this βίος arises out of a certain ἔξις which is precedent to it. In other words, he seems to intend a distinction between the βίος and the ἔξις. However, as Reginald Hackforth rightly noted,⁴ no such distinction is made explicit in the course of the dialogue, and we are left to conclude that the βίος εὐδαίμων is identical to the ἔξις. But this does not mean that Plato thinks that εὐδαιμονία is a merely passive state. In fact, he explicitly repudiates this view in the *Euthydemus* when he says, μὴ μόνον κεκτῆσθαι τὰ τοιαῦτα ἀγαθὰ τὸν μέλλοντα εὐδαίμονα ἔσσεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ χρησθαι αὐτοῖς· ἢ οὐδὲν ὄφελος τῆς κτήσεως γίγνεται (280D5–7).

(2) More important, Plato gives the term ἔξις an active sense. In *Theaetetus* 197B, the Platonic Socrates draws a distinction between *possessing* knowledge (ἐπιστήμης κτήσις) and *having* knowledge (ἐπιστήμης ἔξις). To explain and illustrate this distinction Socrates says (197B8–10): οὐ τοίνυν μοι ταῦτ’ὄν φαίνεται τῷ κεκτῆσθαι τὸ ἔχειν. οἷον ἱμάτιον πριάμενός τις καὶ ἐγκρατῆς ὢν μὴ φορῶν, ἔχειν μὲν οὐκ

1. See also 1. 5, 1095 b32–33; δοκεῖ γὰρ ἐνδέχεσθαι καὶ καθεύδειν ἔχοντα τὴν ἀρετὴν ἢ ἀπρακτεῖν διὰ βίου. Cf. 1. 7, 1098a3–7; 4. 1, 1120a8; 5. 1, 1129b31; 10. 6, 1176a32–b6; and finally, *Pol.* 7. 7, 1328a38, where εὐδαιμονία is defined as ἀρετῆς ἐνέργεια καὶ χρήσις τις τέλειος.

2. *L’Ethique à Nicomaque: Introduction, traduction et commentaire*, II (Louvain, 1959), 66.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Plato’s Examination of Pleasure* (Cambridge, 1945), p. 13, n. 2.

ἀν αὐτὸν αὐτό, κεκτήσθαι γε μὴν φαίμεν.⁵ By using the substantive τὸ ἔχειν to signify an actual having, Plato guarantees to the term ἔξις a meaning equivalent to that of χρήσις or ἐνέργεια. It seems quite likely that this is the meaning which Plato intends in the *Philebus*.

(3) Aristotle was aware of this meaning. In *Metaphysics* 5. 20, 1022b4–5, he says: “Ἐξίς δὲ λέγεται ἓνα μὲν τρόπον οἷον ἐνέργειά τις τοῦ ἔχοντος καὶ ἐχομένου.⁶ This meaning of ἔξις comes under the category ἔχειν.⁷ But Aristotle does not intend it in any other passage of the corpus that I can discover. It seems natural to conclude, therefore, that Aristotle took this meaning from Plato’s dialogues. If so, he cannot have intended to criticize Plato’s definition of εὐδαιμονία when he wrote *E.N.* 1. 8, 1098b31–1099a3, quoted above.

(4) This brings us abreast of the conclusions of Gauthier and Jolif. I turn now to a closer inspection of *Theaetetus* 197B ff. In this passage, the Platonic Socrates sketches a natural history of the human mind. According to Socrates: (a) at birth, a man’s mind is a mere “empty receptacle,” a bird cage without birds; (b) as he matures, the man grasps various “pieces of knowledge,” various birds, and stores them in his bird cage; (c) later, the man retrieves from the cage any given bird whenever his fancy or his circumstances so dictate.

Corresponding to each of the three stages of this natural history, there is a unique sense of “x owns birds,” a unique sense of “x knows.” These three senses embody Plato’s version of the later, better-known Aristotelian-Scholastic distinction between potency, first act, and second act. In the *Theaetetus*, κτήσις signifies first act (having *to* hand); ἔξις signifies second act (having *in* hand). In the *Euthydemus*, κτήσις again signifies first act; χρήσις, however,

signifies second act. But the distinction itself is the same. And in both dialogues, second act is considered as primary.⁸

In the *Theaetetus*, the distinction between “possessing knowledge” and “having knowledge” is employed in an attempt to solve the problem of error. In Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, the same distinction is employed in an attempt to solve the similar problem of ἀκρασία. At 7. 3, 1146b31–35, we read:

‘Ἄλλ’ ἐπεὶ διχῶς λέγομεν τὸ ἐπίστασθαι (καὶ γὰρ ὁ ἔχων μὲν οὐ χρώμενος δὲ τῇ ἐπιστήμῃ καὶ ὁ χρώμενος λέγεται ἐπίστασθαι), διοίσει τὸ ἔχοντα μὲν μὴ θεωροῦντα δὲ καὶ τὸ θεωροῦντα ἃ μὴ δεῖ πράττειν [τοῦ ἔχοντα καὶ θεωροῦντα]. τοῦτο γὰρ δοκεῖ δεινόν, ἀλλ’ οὐκ εἰ μὴ θεωρῶν.

Furthermore, in *De anima* 2. 1, 412a19–29, the distinction is employed to illustrate the two principal senses of “actuality” (ἐντελέχεια). Granted, in both passages Aristotle uses ἔχειν as equivalent to Plato’s κεκτήσθαι and χρήσθαι (or θεωρεῖν) as equivalent to Plato’s ἔχειν. But the distinction itself is the same.

If final evidence for the truth of (4) is required, it may be found in Aristotle’s early *Protrepticus*. The contents of Fragment 4 Walzer⁹ are so similar to those of *Euthydemus* 280D–282D that it seems reasonable to conclude that Aristotle had the latter in mind while writing the former. Furthermore, 280D–282D is precisely that part of the *Euthydemus* in which Plato distinguishes between κτήσις and χρήσις. And this distinction is employed throughout the *Protrepticus*—not only in Fragment 4 Walzer, but also in Fragments 3, 5, and 14. In the latter, one part¹⁰ is especially noteworthy:

φαίνεται διττῶς λέγεσθαι τὸ ζῆν, τὸ μὲν κατὰ δύναμιν τὸ δὲ κατ’ ἐνέργειαν· ὁρῶντα γὰρ εἶναι φαμεν ὅσα τε ἔχει τῶν ζώων ὅσων καὶ δυνατὰ πέφυκεν ἰδεῖν, καὶ

5. A similar transitive use of ἔχειν is found in *Sophist* 247A5–6: ‘Ἄλλ’ οὐ δικαιοσύνης ἔξει καὶ παρουσία τοιαύτην αὐτῶν ἐκάστην γίγνεσθαι καὶ τῶν ἐναντίων τὴν ἐναντίαν. And in *Laws* 625C, τὴν τῶν ὀπλῶν ἔξιν means the actual carrying of arms.

6. See also 5. 23, 1023a8 ff.

7. Instances in this category are “shod” (ὑποδεδεῖται) and “armed” (ὀπλισται). See *Categories* 2a3 and C. M. Gillespie, “The Aristotelian Categories,” *CQ*, XIX (1925), 82–83.

8. Εὐδαιμονία, in its primary sense, is the actual use of life’s “good things.” The best of these good things is knowledge.

And the best possible object of knowledge is the divine. Hence, εὐδαιμονία, in its primary and ultimate sense, is the active contemplation of the final end (or ends) of the universe. In embracing each of these propositions, Aristotle follows Plato’s lead.

9. Esp. p. 27, 1–8 (=Iamblichus *Protrepticus* 37, 3–11 Pistelli).

10. P. 56, 3–9 Walzer (=Iamblichus *Protrepticus* 56, 15–22 Pistelli).

μόντα τυγχάνη, καὶ τὰ χρώμενα τῇ δυνάμει καὶ προσβάλλοντα τὴν ὄψιν. Ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὸ ἐπίστασθαι καὶ τὸ γινώσκειν, ἐν μὲν τὸ χρῆσθαι καὶ θεωρεῖν λέγομεν, ἐν δὲ τὸ κεκτῆσθαι τὴν δύναμιν καὶ τὴν ἐπιστήμην ἔχειν.

This is a seminal statement of Aristotle's later, full-blown theory of potency and act.¹¹ And again, as in the *Ethics* and *De anima* passages cited above, there is a striking similarity to *Theaetetus* 197B.

I do not wish to suggest that the theory of potency and act is Plato's. Obviously, it is not. Plato explicitly distinguishes between the potential and the actual on only two occasions;

11. *Metaphysics* 9. 6–9, elaborated 1049b3 ff.; summarized 1051a4 ff.

12. *Plato's Progress* (Cambridge, 1966), p. 4: "Aristotle was, from pretty early in his career as a philosopher, quite at home with the notion of Potentiality *versus* Actuality, and with the kindred notions of Possibility, Contingency, Neces-

and, apart from these occasions, he makes little use of his distinction. Nevertheless, Plato's distinction between *κτῆσις* and *χρῆσις* (or between *κτῆσις* and *ἐξις*) is the source of Aristotle's distinction between *ἐξις* and *ἐνέργεια*. This distinction provides the stimulus for Aristotle's development of the theory of potency and act. The arguments of this paper will, I hope, convince those, like Professor Ryle,¹² who deny the existence of any such stimulus.

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sity, and Impossibility. That the stimulus to Aristotle's thoughts on these modal notions came from recent or contemporary Megarians is a tempting guess. At least no such stimulus could have come from anything written by Plato with the dubious exception of his *Hippias Minor*."

CATULLUS AND THE TRADITIONS OF LATIN POETRY

The Catullan revolution has become in recent years a glib phrase used by many scholars to denote the emergence into prominence of a new type of poetry, partly dependent upon Alexandrian prototypes. Unfortunately, that phrase has tended to depict too vividly Catullus and his contemporaries blazing a new trail in virgin territory, thereby obscuring the hesitant steps of the earlier Roman poets whom they were following with confidence and flamboyance. We can search with some success amongst Catullus' predecessors for his hallmarks.¹

I

Alexandrian poetry: Strong Alexandrian in-

fluence on Roman poets can be traced back even to Ennius, the father of Latin poetry, who adapted or translated Euhemerus, Sotades, and Archestratus.² Of considerably greater interest for the study of Catullus is the fact that in the proem to his most important and mature work, the *Annals*, Ennius was, if not influenced by, at least aware of, the literary theories of Callimachus.³ Clausen⁴ believes that the proem was polemical, to refute the theories of Callimachus and to show that epic could still be written. Skutsch⁵ has remarked that Ennius was not only aware of these theories, but was writing out of respect for them (for since Ennius considered himself to be a reincarnation of Homer,⁶ whom Callim-

1. This article is not intended to be comprehensive, but to discuss some of the distinguishing features of Catullus' poetry. For general works in this field, see A. L. Wheeler, *Catullus and the Traditions of Ancient Poetry* (Berkeley, 1934), pp. 61 ff.; H. Bardon, "Catulle et ses modèles poétiques de langue latine," *Latomus*, XVI (1957), 614–27; K. F. Quinn, *The Catullan Revolution* (Melbourne, 1959), pp. 1 ff.

2. For other Alexandrian influences, see O. Skutsch, *The Annals of Quintus Ennius* (Inaugural Lecture, University College, London, 1953), pp. 8–9, and J. K. Newman, *Augustus and the New Poetry* (Brussels, 1967), pp. 64 ff.

3. For the evidence, see *Aetia*, Frag. 1. 2 Pf. and the Florentine scholiast; *Anth. Pal.* 7. 42; Prop. 2. 34. 32; Fronto *ad Marc.* 1. 4. 5. For the view that Callimachus did influence

Ennius, see J. H. Waszink, "The Proem in the *Annales* of Ennius," *Mnem.*, III (1950), 215–40; however, cf. also G. Marconi, "Il proemio degli *Annales* di Ennio," *RCCM*, III (1961), 224–45; and H. Fuchs, "Zu den *Annalen* des Ennius," *Mus. Helv.*, XII (1955), 201–5, who suggests the influence of Stesichorus.

4. W. V. Clausen, "Callimachus and Latin Poetry," *GRBS*, V (1964), 185–87.

5. *Op. cit.*, p. 11. Although he has reservations about the influence of Callimachus, he states that Ennius was thinking of Callimachus.

6. Cf. Persius *Prolog.* 2. 3; Skutsch, "Enniana, I," *CQ*, XXXVIII (1944), 85–86.