



Politics, Book 7.1-7.11

PHIL 2011

2011-12



Essay tutorials

1. Essay tutorials:


****29 November****

2. Notification of peer groups over yahoo.
3. Post drafts on yahoo group **no later than Monday, 28 November.**
4. 13 December: essays due.
5. Thanks and good luck!



Happiness

Should one be coach potato,
statesman or philosopher?



Good life = Happiness, *eudaimonia* (Gr.)

Common Greek notion: doing well, flourishing, pleasure

◆ *Nicomachean Ethics*:

- Happiness = good life, highest good, good in itself
- H. = *Pleasure*, but how understood?
 - As ‘life of grazing animals’ (hedonism, amusement, relaxation or other pastimes)? No! either slavish or means to other ends (*NE* 1095b17-20, 1176b30-35);
 - ‘no one would allow that a slave shares in happiness’ (*NE*, 1177a5-10)
 - As honor? ‘too superficial’ (*NE*, 1095b25; cf. Sparta)
 - As wealth? only means to an end!



Goods necessary for good life

- ◆ Goods necessary for good life:
 - External goods— examples?
 - Goods of body-- examples?
 - Goods of soul-- examples?
- Ratio of goods to each other?



Comment

- ◆ Aristotle says that the best life, both for individuals and states, is the life of excellence, when excellence has external goods enough for the performance of good actions;”. In other words, before we can do anything with our excellence, we need to have an external environment that is sufficient to support us. At the same time, external goods cannot be had in excess, otherwise excellence will be stymied.
- ◆ But how much is ‘enough’? If a poor man lacking in external goods manages to make the best out of what he has to do right actions, do we say that he has enough, and that to give him more would be to give him an excess?
- ◆ Perhaps if he could have more external goods, he would be able to perform more right actions?



External goods

“...happiness, whether consisting in pleasure [of acting virtuously] or excellence, or both, is more often found with those who are most highly *cultivated* in their mind and in their character, and have only a *moderate* share of external goods” (emph. added).



Ratio of goods to each other?

- ◆ Necessity of all three is ‘almost universally acknowledged’ (166);
 - some (e.g. hedonists) set no limits to external goods
 - require only a moderate excellence.
- ◆ For Aristotle
 - The ‘facts’ show that ‘mankind does not acquire or preserve the excellences by the help of external goods,
 - but external goods by the help of the excellences.’

Role of chance (luck)

- ◆ Ancient Greeks placated gods to secure good fortune;
- ◆ Aristotle implies this is not the way to secure happiness.
 - Happiness depends to a degree on external goods, and therefore luck
 - “...it is for the sake of the soul that goods external and...of the body are desirable at all” (167).
 - “...herein...lies the difference between good fortune and happiness; for external goods come of themselves and chance is the author of them”;
 - “...but no one is just or temperate by or through chance” (167).
- ◆ But neither luck nor external goods are key to happiness;
- ◆ Your own conduct is!



Relation of good to function

The good of a thing (its happiness) depends on its function:

‘...living is apparently shared with plants [and sense-perception with animals], but what we are looking for is the special function of a human being....The remaining possibility, then, is some sort of life of action of the [part of the soul] that has reason’ (*NE*, 1098a).

What kind of action?



Which way of life is best?

- ◆ Citizen, with obligations?
 - If citizen, exercising constitutional or arbitrary rule?
- ◆ Alien, without any ties?
- ◆ Business?
- ◆ Military?
- ◆ **Philosophy?**
 - The ‘contemplative’ life, along with that of the statesman, ‘appear[s] to have been preferred by those who have been most keen in the pursuit of excellence’ (168).



Happiness (*Pol.*, Bk 7)

- Self-sufficiency:
 - ‘by itself it makes a life choiceworthy and lacking nothing’ (NE, 1097b15);
- Includes other ends (virtues) pursued for their own sake, e.g. temperance, magnanimity, understanding;
- Happiness = **activity**, not a state (NE, 1176b)
 - ‘...the human good turns out to be the soul’s activity that expresses virtue’ (NE, 1098a16-17)
- What is **most happy** life? Life of study, i.e. **PHILOSOPHY!**



Philosophic (contemplative) life

- ◆ ‘this activity is supreme since understanding [reason] is the supreme element in us, and the objects of understanding are the supreme objects of knowledge’ (*NE*, 1177a20)
 - expresses virtue
 - is continuous
 - involves leisure (activity of politician is not as leisurely)
 - is self-sufficient, has no end beyond itself;
- ◆ It is ‘god-like,’ a life for him who has ‘a divine element in him’ (*NE*, 1177b25-1178a).



Necessity of excellence

- ◆ “...neither individual nor state can do right actions without excellence and wisdom”;
- ◆ “the happy state may be shown to be that which is best and which acts rightly”;
- ◆ “Thus, the courage, justice, and wisdom of a state have the same form and nature as the qualities which give the individual who possesses them the name of just, wise or temperate” (167).
- ◆ “...the excellence of the good man is necessarily the same as the excellence of the citizen of the perfect state” (91).



Raw materials of the state: people

- ◆ Population—*power* (capability) = criterion of greatness;
- ◆ Comprises citizens, slaves and metics;
- ◆ “...the number of the latter is a proof of the greatness of a city”;
- ◆ Prefer soldiers to artisans (why? what city would be great on this criterion?).



Size of population

- ◆ City needs “population sufficient for good life in the political community” (how much is that?”);
 - Yet small enough to preserve *order*;
- ◆ Problems of large state:
 - multitude cannot be orderly, “for law is order and good law is good order” (172);
 - resident aliens may pass themselves off as citizens.
- ◆ Small enough for citizens ‘to judge and to distribute offices according to merit’ (173);
- ◆ Need to *limit* population (see 7.16, 1335^b25 re abortion).



Comment

- ◆ Aristotle suggests that the end of a good city is to enable its citizens to live well and achieve happiness. While from our experience modern cities composed of millions of people are still manageable, many of these cities may not be functioning well according to his view of a good city.
- ◆ This is because many big cities are formed for the benefit of business and trade, and the wealth-getting of their people. But wealth-getting should only be a means to living well but not an end in itself.
- ◆ Apart from that, many researches have shown people living in big cities are generally less happy than those living in small cities or towns. So these big modern cities have strayed from the original purpose of Aristotle's good city.



Comment

- ◆ As stated in Book VII, the size of city shall be limited to self-sufficient in all mere necessities which not too large or too small which the limit will be ascertained by experience. On the other hand, the goal of the city is to create a life of leisure for its citizens. It requires non-citizens (e.g. slaves, women) to work to create leisure for the citizens to enjoy happiness.
- ◆ This is justified by means of Aristotle's teleological view of nature in which Greeks were better than non-Greeks.
- ◆ However, I am wondering if his argument is contradicted by his point that citizens enjoying leisure time for happiness are more important than any necessities in the city? Or does Aristotle think that happiness is a necessity for us or the telos of life?
- ◆ If so, then what is the point of limiting the size of city?



Raw material: territory

- ◆ Self-sufficiency is best—abundance of necessities;
- ◆ Sufficient for temperance and liberality (generosity);
- ◆ Inaccessible to enemies; accessible to inhabitants;
- ◆ Accessible to importation of goods from both sea and land.



Accessible by sea (7.6)?

- ◆ Best that city be connected with the sea;
- ◆ In war, will need aid (food, troops, supplies) from sea if blocked by land;
- ◆ Needs to import things it lacks;
- ◆ Problems:
 - Invasions by enemies;
 - Foreigners and their ways of life, gods, etc. (like Piraeus, Athens' port city).



Should city be a market, and if so, for whom (7.6)?

- ◆ Must have market to trade own products for necessary imports;
 - ‘...a city ought to be a market, not indeed for others, but for herself’;
- ◆ Market exists only for revenue;
 - ‘...if a state ought not to desire profit of this kind it ought not to have such an emporium’;
- ◆ Port protected by walled road to city (Athens connected to Piraeus by a 3 km fortified wall).



What about the navy (7.6)?

- ◆ Navy was a major force in the Athenian polis;
- ◆ What does Aristotle think?
 - ‘a moderate naval force is advantageous’;
 - ‘proper number...of this force is relative to the character of the state’;
 - ‘there is no necessity that the sailors should be citizens’;
 - they can be non-citizen farmers;
 - recall discussion of qualifications for citizenship in Book 3.




Hippocratic environmental determinism

Strong connection b/w climate and health;

Climate affects character of a people: “Climates differ and cause differences in character” (“AWP” in Lloyd, 161).

See G.E.R. Lloyd, ed. “Airs, Waters, Places,” in *Hippocratic Writings* (London: Penguin, 1978), 148-69.



Character of the citizens; Aristotle's race theory (7.7)

- ◆ Cold climates (Europe) breed warriors:
 - full of spirit, but unable to govern themselves;
- ◆ Hot ones breed intelligent slaves:
 - Asia Minor, Near and Middle East;
- ◆ S. America, E. Asia unknown;
- ◆ Temperate climate best (Greece)--the *mean*; its men have:
 - enough spirit to fight for their freedom;
 - enough intelligence to rule themselves.



Background: Hippocratic medicine

- ◆ Medicine defined as ‘art’ or *techne* (5th c. BCE)
 - Physicians’ precarious status
 - Socially inferior if they charged fees (like mechanics)
 - Some actually slaves, acc. to Plato’s *Laws*
 - Some very successful
 - Rivals: herbalists, gymnastic trainers, and magicians.
- ◆ Hippocrates of Cos (Asia Minor):
 - Famous Greek physician, born ca. 460 BCE
 - Supposed father of the Hippocratic Oath
 - School of medical thought bears his name.



Greek vs. Chinese medical theory

Greek medical theory

Internal

- ◆ Balances humors/elements (disagreements)
- ◆ Prescribes diet & exercise

External

- ◆ Notice climatic effects
- ◆ Especially seasonal changes
- ◆ Take corrective measures
- ◆ Study meteorology and astronomy.

Chinese medical theory

- ◆ Balance yin and yang
- ◆ Note whether underlying constitution is hot or cold
- ◆ Prescribe medicine accordingly
- ◆ Maintain flow of chi
- ◆ Important diagnostic role of pulses

Any role accorded to weather and other external factors?



Hippocratic Racial Ideas (“AWP”)

- ◆ Links climate to racial traits
- ◆ Tradition extends to Montesquieu (France) in 18th century:
 - ‘Asia differs very much from Europe in the nature of everything that grows there, vegetable or human.’
 - ‘Everything grows much bigger and finer in Asia, and the nature of the land is tamer, while the character of the inhabitants is milder and less passionate’;
- ◆ “The reason for this is the equable blending of the climate, for it lies in the midst of the sunrise facing the dawn” (AWP, 159).



‘Asiatics’ (East Asia not known)

- ◆ ‘The small variations of climate to which the Asiatics are subject account for their mental flabbiness and cowardice as well.’
- ◆ ‘They are less warlike than Europeans and tamer of spirit, for they are not subject to those physical changes and the mental stimulation which sharpen tempers and induce recklessness...’;
- ◆ ‘Where there are always changes, men’s minds are roused so that they cannot stagnate’ (AWP, 160).

Role of Politics in Forming Racial Traits

- ◆ Not a purely biological theory:
 - ‘...a contributory cause [of Asian traits] lies in their customs, for the greater part is under monarchical rule’ (AWP, 160; also Aristotle, 7.7).
- ◆ Hence:
 - Asians don’t rule or defend themselves;
 - Have no need to practice gymnastic, arts of war;
 - If they are brave, advantage is master’s, not their own (hence, their lack of bravery is rational);
 - Are unfamiliar with war.



Necessities of City (7.8)

- ◆ Property necessary, but not sufficient:
‘...property...is no part of a state; for a state is a community of equals, aiming at the best life possible’ (176);
- ◆ Religion
- ◆ Food
- ◆ Arts
- ◆ Arms
- ◆ Revenue
- ◆ Decision-making power for public interest.



Occupations & Citizenship (7.9)

- ◆ Classes originated in Egypt and Crete;
 - Should each to perform many occupations (as Marx proposes?)
 - Or only one per person (as Plato proposes?)
- ◆ Citizens ‘must not lead the life of artisans or tradesmen for such a life is ignoble and inimical to excellence’;
- ◆ ‘Neither must they be farmers, since leisure is necessary both the for development of excellence and the performance of political duties.’



Slavery

- ◆ Farmers = slaves from a less spirited race, or “barbarian country people”;
- ◆ Household slaves;
- ◆ Others for state;
- ◆ BUT “...liberty should be always held out to them as the reward of their services” (181);
- ◆ Compare manumission contracts!



Citizen roles

- ◆ Only citizens should own property;
- ◆ Councillors (rulers) and warriors may be the same
- ◆ ‘those who carry arms can always determine the fate of the constitution’ (178);
- ◆ But should serve in these functions according to their age;
- ◆ Warriors when young, rulers when older.



Common Meals ('Tables')

- ◆ Common meals originated in Italy:
 - “...a well-ordered city should always have them”
 - “...open to all the citizens”
 - BONDING for community spirit;
- ◆ Provided by public lands as in Crete;
- ◆ Not from private lands, as in Sparta:
 - excludes poor and entails loss of citizenship by non-participants.
- ◆ Public lands also provide for public worship.



Common tables, cont.

- ◆ Tables for different groups:
 - For guards in guardhouses;
 - For magistrates and priests in “a suitable place”;
 - For priests near the temples;
- ◆ “The site should be seen far and wide, which gives due elevation to excellence and towers over the neighborhood” (183);
- ◆ Symbolic role; compare use of symbols today— flags, parades, statues....