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Are the Utopians "happy"? Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Politics* and the concept of *Eudaimonia* in Thomas More's *Utopia*

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Abstract
Aristotle always wished to provide his interlocutors, and posterity, with an account of how the good person should live, and how society should be structured in order to make such lives possible. The *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics,* which are among Aristotle's books of practical philosophy, are straightforwardly concerned with such questions. Aristotle believes that a city state should have *eudaimonia,* happiness, as its goal, and considers the ideal constitution as one in which every citizen achieves *eudaimonia*. Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, also, in its Book 2, gives an account of an ideal state. This essay will put

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Aristotle's *Ethics* and *Politics* under close observation and apply Aristotle's philosophical attitude expressed in these two works to *Utopia* in order to figure out: (a) are the Utopians happy in Aristotelian terms? (b) is the Utopian constitution an ideal one—in which every citizen achieves *eudaimonia*?

Keywords: *Eudaimonia*, Utopia, happiness, virtue, pleasure, constitution, Commonwealth, slavery

1. Introduction

Aristotle (394-322 BC) is often credited to be one of "the most influential of all philosophers, ancient, medieval, or modern" (Russell, 2004, p. 104). He was beyond doubt a "man of encyclopedic learning" (Dutton, 1986, p. 20): his *oeuvre*, only one-fifth of which survives, has been developed into what is generally known as *Corpus Aristotelicum*, a multi-volume set of nearly one-and-a-half million words" (Aristotle, 2004, p. vii) covering a wide range of ideas and issues including logics, mathematics, the nature of reality, physics, knowledge, the mind, language, biology, physiology, astronomy, time, theology, literature, rhetoric and the nature of human happiness. *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics* are included among the six books on ethics and politics in the *Corpus Aristotelicum*. The rest includes *Magna Moralia*, *Eudemian Ethics*, *On Virtues and Vices* and *Economics*.

Aristotle puts a large number of moral issues under scrutiny in his *Nicomachean Ethics*: "happiness," "virtue and the mean," "voluntariness and responsibility," "justice," "practical wisdom," "incontinence," "friendship," and "pleasure." One of the seminal aims of the work, however, is undoubtedly to "give a reflective understanding of well-being or the good life for humans" (Honderich, 2005, p. 55). This, he believes, can be achieved through what he terms *eudaimonia* (Stalley, 1998, p. xii). He "invites us to conceive of the human good as a special kind of end. In the very first line of the *Nicomachean Ethics* he says, 'Every craft and every inquiry, and likewise every action and every

choice, seem to aim at some good; for which reason people have rightly concluded that the good is that at which all things aim. He calls this ultimate goal of the successful life *eudaimonia*, or happiness" (Lear, 2004, p. 1). This, according to Stalley, has two major features: "it has, above everything else, the character of an end—i.e. we seek other things for the sake of *eudaimonia* but seek *eudaimonia* purely for its own sake; and it is self-sufficient—i.e. *eudaimonia* is not only desirable in itself but there is nothing which could be added to it to make it more desirable" (Aristotle, 1998, p. xii).

Aristotle's next book, the *Politics*, "has also *eudaimonia* as its goal" (Audi, 1999, p. 51). One of the theses that he holds in the *Politics* is: "A city state has as its goal well-being, and the ideal constitution is one in which every citizen achieves well-being" (Honderich, 2005, p. 56). There is obviously a strong relationship between 'well-being' as developed here and 'happiness' as put forward in *Ethics*. As Furley maintains, "The point of studying ethics is to understand the nature of individual human happiness; this is the 'end' of studying ethics. Politics will include that end, in the sense that it will decide how the human good is to be pursued within a city" (Furley, 2005, p. 113). As a profound treatise on how well-being / happiness can be achieved, *Politics* has had immense influence on later philosophers and politicians. "It influenced John Locke and Thomas Jefferson, and echoes of Aristotle's voice can be heard in the language of the American Declaration of Independence. Even today, his ideas provide a foundation for debate on issues that he framed over two millennia ago" (Moss, 2006, p. 362).

As the first sustained effort in the literature of England to delineate man's perfect state of well-being, More's *Utopia* provides fertile ground for the investigation of Aristotle's *eudaimonia* at least for two reasons: the very name 'Utopia' has long entered the literary and political vocabulary of many languages as a byword for the ideal, and it works virtually through the same contrast between the practical and the ideal which is propounded (particularly) in Aristotle's *Politics*. The work is divided into two books. "Book I is set up as a philosophical debate on government, with legal, social, political, economic, and military

issues brought forward for discussion" and "Book II, largely narrated by Hythloday, presents the solution to the problems posed in Book I" (Lawrence, Seifter, & Ratner, 1985, p. 84).

Although people would generally refer to any ideal place as a Utopia, More's 'Utopia' itself has proved to be a far less than straightforward concept—his " love of irony", makes it practically impossible to arrive at a single consensus as to how the work can be appreciated and makes it eternally "subject to different interpretations" (Audi, 19999, p. 591). In fact, there are quite varying lines of interpretation regarding the work: "One group of critics, including Michelet, Knox, and Campbell, regard [it] as a learned Renaissance joke, or *jeu d'esprit*, which is ironic in intention: in this view, More presents a "perfect" society which is deliberately, and comically, imperfect" (Lawrence et al., 1985, p. 82). *Utopia*'s Utopia is "imperfect" because: "Utopia is a society that rests upon slavery, including enslavement for social deviance. There is no variety in dress or housing or cityscape, no privacy. Citizens are encouraged to value pleasure, but they are constantly monitored, lest their pursuit of pleasure pass the strict bounds set by "nature" or "reason." There is nominal freedom of thought, and toleration of religious diversity is built into the Utopian constitution, but still the priests can punish people for "impiety." The Utopians officially despise war, but they nevertheless appear to fight a good many of them" (Greenblatt, 2006, p. 520).

Other critics, like Kautsky, Oncken, and Ames, "view *Utopia* as a serious argument for such social philosophies as communism, democracy, or colonialism". Still others, such as R. W. Chambers, treat it as a religious sermon addressed to sinning Christians, and Edward Surtz views it as a subtle philosophical tract grounded in Christian humanism. This divergence of views makes it clear that the tone of *Utopia* is highly ambiguous, perhaps intentionally so" (Lawrence et al., 1985, p. 82).

For all the divergence of ideas on More's (2006) *Utopia*, there does not seem to be any disagreement as to what the work is mainly about: it is about man's "well-being", a well-being the "ideal constitution" can provide its citizens with. This is obviously what Aristotle is also concerned with. In Books VII and VIII of the *Politics* "Aristotle speculates on the best regime imaginable,

without worrying about practicalities. His evaluation is naturally based on his idea of the best way of life, that is, a life of happiness derived from virtue" (Moss, 2006, p. 358). More and the Aristotle of *Ethics* and *Politics* would appear to meet precisely at this point. An examination of the different forms of constitution discussed in the *Politics* can be applied to the constitution of More's Utopia to see whether it could be considered an ideal constitution in Aristotelian terms where every citizen achieves *eudaimonia*. This would hopefully provide an insight into such questions as: if the Utopians are really 'happy' and whether the Utopian constitution is an ideal one in which every citizen achieves *eudaimonia*.

We will follow the discussion by putting Aristotle's the *Nicomachean Ethics* under close observation, and trying to figure out which aspects of it are to be found in More's Utopia.

2. *Nicomachean Ethics*: Happiness, Virtue and Pleasure

Aristotle's *Ethics* "concerns the good, and it soon becomes clear that his focus is initially on the nature of the human good, or human happiness (*eudaimonia*) (Aristotle, 2004, p. x): "Every skill and every inquiry, and similarly every action and rational choice, is thought to aim at some good; and so the good has been aptly described as that at which everything aims" (Aristotle, 2004, p. 3). People's attitude towards the question of the human happiness, according to Aristotle, may be placed in different categories (those who equal happiness with "pleasure"; those who equal it with "honour"; and those who find it in a "contemplative life"), but these are not all 'self-sufficient' and of prime value to human life: "We take what is self-sufficient to be that which on its own makes life worthy of choice and lacking in nothing. We think happiness to be such, and indeed the thing most of all worth choosing, not counted as just one thing among others" (Aristotle, 2004, p. 11). Aristotle's conception of the element of happiness is, at the same time, an entirely teleological one— "his approach to ethics emphasizes the 'endiness', or finality, of the human good, or happiness. Given what Aristotle thinks an end is, this approach is promising. An end provides the standards for success for the processes and goods

subordinate to it. If happiness is the end of a flourishing human life, then understanding its form should provide insight into what subordinate goods we ought to pursue and how we ought to pursue them" (Lear, 2004, p. 23).

It should also be borne in mind that Aristotle believes a fulfilled life is a life lived "in accordance with virtue" (Hughes, 2001, p. 53). His *ergon* argument concludes that "human happiness consists in the exercise of the virtues" (Aristotle, 2004, p. xiv). He discusses *ergon*—or the characteristic activity—in the *Nicomachean Ethics* in the following terms: "But perhaps saying that happiness is the chief good sounds rather platitudinous, and one might want its nature to be specified still more clearly. It is possible that we might achieve that if we grasp the characteristic activity of a human being. For just as the good—the doing well—of a flute player, a sculptor or any practitioner of a skill, or generally whatever has some characteristic activity or action, is thought to lie in its characteristic activity, so the same would seem to be true of a human being, if indeed he has a characteristic activity (Aristotle, 2004). According to Crisp, this 'characteristic activity of human beings' "is the exercise of reason: that is what, Aristotle thinks, makes human beings what they are. The good of a human being, then, will be exercising that capacity well. But what is it to do that? The good is acting well, and acting well is acting in accordance with the virtues. So exercising rationality well will consist in exercising rationality in acting virtuously." (Aristotle, 2004, p. xiii) Aristotle would, in Moss's words, 'reject' that virtue is 'an emotion or a capacity' and "argues instead that [it] is a habit or disposition in actions or emotions […] a disposition to choose the right thing, that is, the mean between extremes as determined by a prudent person. Courage, for instance, lies between the extremes of cowardice and recklessness. In Aristotle's view, a virtuous person would be disposed to choose a course of action between such extremes […]" (Aristotle, 2004, p. 356).

Like virtue, Aristotle's concept of pleasure is closely linked to his idea of *eudaimonia*. It "plays a central role in [his] account of ethics. Virtue involves pleasure and pain both in its exercise, and in its acquisition. The virtue of temperance focuses on the bodily pleasures, while the virtuous person enjoys the exercise of any

virtue, even courage. What people enjoy or dislike has a strong influence on what they do, so that pleasure and pain are very important aspects of any moral education. Hence pleasure is part of happiness itself" (Aristotle, 2004, p. xxxii). In Aristotle's thought, "… pleasure seems to be especially closely associated with beings like us". This is why people educate the young by steering them in the right direction with pleasure and pain. Also, enjoying and hating the right things seems the most important factors in virtue of character, because pleasure and pain run through the whole of life; and they have weighty significance for virtue and the happy life, since people rationally choose what is pleasant, and avoid what is painful (Aristotle, 2004). He would, however, make some qualifications to his idea of 'pleasure': it is not a process ("… it is wrong to say that there is a process or a coming-to-be of pleasure. For not everything can be so described, but only what has parts and is not a whole; for there is no coming-to-be of seeing, or a point, or a unit, and none of these is either a process or a coming-to-be. Thus, since it is a whole, there is no coming-to-be of pleasure either" [Aristotle, 2004, pp. 188-189), and it does not possess the two features that *eudaimonia* enjoys: being the most complete end and being sufficient in itself.

3. Happiness, Virtue, and Pleasure in More's *Utopia*

We have so far taken into consideration and analyzed the main concepts expressed by Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and have seen that, in one sense, the entire *Ethics* can be said to pivot on one word: *eudaimonia*. We have noted that Aristotle's approach towards the concept of happiness is a totally teleological one. Happiness is self-sufficient and—no matter how we twist it and argue up and down—the aim of all things we do is to achieve *eudaimonia*. We have also observed that *eudaimonia* is closely connected with other elements, such as virtue and pleasure. It is now time to put *Utopia*'s Utopia under scrutiny and figure out how its people live and what aspects of Aristotle's world views expressed in the *Nicomachean Ethics* are to be found in Utopia.

"The foundation of the Utopian state is the human reason, which is applied to all questions of domestic and public management.

Rational and logical considerations, as defined by More, determine the ethics, amusement, laws, and religious practices of the inhabitants" (Lawrence et al., 1985, p. 81).

> In matters of moral philosophy, they carry on much the same arguments as we do. They inquire into the nature of the good, distinguishing goods of the body from goods of the mind and external goods. They ask whether the name of "good" may be applied to all three, or applies only to goods of the mind. They discuss virtue and pleasure, but their chief concern is what to think of human happiness, and whether it consists of one thing or of more. They seem overly inclined to the view of those who think that all or most human happiness consists of pleasure. And what is more surprising, they seek support for this comfortable opinion from their religion, which is serious and strict, indeed almost stern and forbidding. For they never discuss happiness without joining to their philosophic rationalism certain principles drawn from religion. (More, 2006, p. 561)

As in Aristotle, the Utopians are concerned with "the nature of the good." In fact, we may cite the very opening lines of Aristotle's *Ethics*—"Every skill and every inquiry, and similarly every action and rational choice, is thought to aim at some good; and so the good has been aptly described as that at which everything aims"—to draw attention to the fact that both Aristotle and More are concerned with ‘the good’ in human life: even the "threefold classification of goods [exercised among the Utopians] is associated especially with Aristotle" (Greenblatt, 2006, p. 561). The two elements of "virtue" and "pleasure", it may at the same time be observed, are also of vital importance among the Utopians and they usually "discuss" these two elements. However, "their chief concern is what to think of human happiness." This feature, also, as already mentioned, is Aristotle's main concern in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

There are, nevertheless, some differences between the Utopians and Aristotle. Despite the apparent similarities with Aristotle, when Utopians consider what happiness is, they "seem overly inclined to the views of those who think that all or most human happiness consists of pleasure." "Pleasure, in the broad sense of that term accepted by Epicurean philosophy, is a central value of Utopian culture. Though today we normally use the word to denote the

merely superficial or frivolous, pleasure as defined rationally is not antithetical to but equivalent to virtue. Any action or activity must be judged by the amount, quality, and duration of the pleasure it produces. Given these premises, bodily pleasures and physical indulgences like eating and sex fall low on the scale, with virtuous conduct and intellectual activity at the apex. Reason dictates that the virtuous life, which promises both a lifetime of spiritual and mental fulfilment and the ultimate enjoyment of an eternal heavenly abode, is the most enduring and sublime of pleasures" (Lawrence et al., 1985, p. 81).

But what is "pleasure" among the Utopians? It certainly does not mean "mere undiscriminating sensual indulgence" as the Utopians place "primary emphasis on the pleasure of a virtuous, rational life" (Greenblatt, 2006, p. 561).

> They distinguish several different classes of true pleasure, some being pleasures of the mind and others pleasures of the body. Those of the mind are knowledge and the delight which rises from contemplating the truth, also the gratification of looking back on a well-spent life and the unquestioning hope of happiness to come. Pleasures of the body they also divide into two classes. The first is that which fills the senses with immediate delight. The second kind of bodily pleasure they describe as nothing but the calm and harmonious state of the body, its state of health when undisturbed by any disorder. (More, 2006, pp. 564-565)

The Utopians, like in Aristotle, divide the element of pleasure into two categories: that of the mind and that of the body. In their categorization of pleasures of the mind, one of the categories is "the delight which rises from contemplating the truth." This, again, reminds us of Aristotle's categorization of happiness, in which, some people find happiness in "contemplative life." The Utopians, also, like Aristotle, directly relate "happiness" to "pleasure."

> To be sure, they believe happiness is found, not in every kind of pleasure, but only in good and honest pleasure. Virtue itself, they say, draws our nature to this kind of pleasure, as to the supreme good. There is an opposed school which declares that virtue is itself happiness. (More, 2006, p. 561)

But what is virtue to the Utopians?

> They define virtue as living according to nature; and God, they say, created us to that end. Thus they say that nature herself prescribes for us a joyous life, in other words, pleasure, as the goal of our actions; and living according to her prescriptions is to be defined as virtue. (More, 2006, p. 562)

As seen above, one of the major differences between the Utopians and Aristotle is that the Utopians believe "pleasure" is "the goal of our actions." To Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, however, "happiness" is the ultimate goal of whatever the human beings do. Another point of departure from Aristotle among the Utopians is that they relate their ethics and philosophy to their religion: "For they never discuss happiness without joining to their philosophic rationalism certain principles drawn from religion." Although their religious principles have the element of "happiness" in it, religion is something which Aristotle does not take into consideration when he mulls over the ethical and philosophical issues.

> Their religious principles are of this nature: that the soul of man is immortal, and by God's goodness born for happiness; that after this life, rewards are appointed for our virtues and good deeds, punishments for our sins. (More, 2006, p. 561)

To sum up, it should be said that although the Utopians have much in common with Aristotle, they cannot be said to be wholly Aristotelian in their attitude towards their moral philosophy. Aristotle takes "happiness" to be the ultimate goal, but the Utopians take "pleasure" to be the ultimate goal. Aristotle would obviously ruminate over the element of pleasure and directly relates it to happiness, but he would have, in all probability, strongly reacted to the view of the Utopians that pleasure is "the goal of our actions." In Aristotle's view, pleasure—unlike happiness—is neither self-sufficient, nor an ultimate goal.

4. Aristotle's *Politics*: Constitution, Commonwealth, Slavery

Aristotle deals with an agglomeration of different ideas in *Politics*. For the purposes of this article, however, three major strands discussed in it can be singled out: constitution, commonwealth, and slavery. Aristotle initiates his discussion of constitution by considering "both those constitutions that are in force in cities considered to be well governed and those constitutions that have been proposed by our predecessors" (Aristotle, 1998, p. 38). He then continues the discussion by taking Plato's views expressed in *Republic* and *Laws*, and those of Phaleas of Chalcedon and Hippodamus of Miletus, into close consideration and duly mulls over the actual constitutions which approach the ideal: the Spartan, the Cretan and the Carthaginian constitutions; he finally comes up with his own classification of constitutions:

> The classification of constitutions depends on (1) the ends pursued by cities, and (2) the kind of rule exercised by their governments. The true end of a city is a good life, and it is the common interest to achieve this: the right kind of rule is authority exercised in the common interest. We may thus distinguish 'right' constitutions, which are directed to the common interest, and 'wrong' or 'perverted' constitutions directed to the selfish interest of the ruling body." (Aristotle, 1998, p. 97)

"Altogether Aristotle has identified six types of regime: three fundamental ones (monarchy, aristocracy, and republic) and their debased forms (tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy). In book IV he considers which is best and which is most practicable. He calls tyranny the worst of the deviant regimes. True aristocracy, rule by the finest few or very best, is a form that Aristotle seems to think is not possible. Moving to oligarchy and democracy, he notes that each is either ill or well suited to a polis depending on its social and economic composition" (Moss, 2006, p. 356).

Aristotle considers kingship (monarchy), aristocracy, and the constitutional government (republic) as the "right constitutions" but refuses to lay down the rule by saying explicitly which one has an advantage over the other. As Miller (1995) maintains, "Aristotle's theory of constitutions is supposed to determine how many constitutions there are. His most familiar classification distinguishes six different constitutions. This classification has two dimensions: first, how widely political rights are distributed among the inhabitants, viz., to one, few, or many; second, whether the constitution is correct (unqualifiedly just) or deviant, i.e. whether or not it aims at the common advantage" (Miller, pp. 153-154). True to his spirit, Aristotle is here as in many other places in his *oeuvre* the great classifier, and although we may detect a certain tendency in him towards the constitutional government, it is a moot point whether he was really in favour of a single constitution as 'best'.

Aristotle's *Politics* can, in one sense, be taken as a reaction based on a misunderstanding of Plato's idea of commonwealth in his *Republic*. According to Stalley,

> Aristotle's discussion of the *Republic* [in *Ethics*] has caused a good deal of puzzlement. By his [Aristotle's] account 'Socrates' in the *Republic* assumes that, in order to ensure that the state is a unity, citizens should share as much as possible and should therefore hold wives, children, and property in common. What the *Republic* in fact proposes is that the guardian class should be forbidden to have private property and that they should hold women and children in common. Very little is said about the class of farmers, artisans, and traders but, since the arrangements described for the guardians do not apply to them, most commentators assume that they will have property and families in the usual way. (Aristotle, 1998, p. 332)

However, whether or not Aristotle's reaction in *Ethics* to Plato's *Republic* is justified, the *Nicomachean Ethics* makes it clear that Aristotle is entirely opposed to any form of communism and commonwealth. He cites a number of reasons for this in his *Politics*:

> What is common to the greatest number gets the least amount of care. People pay most attention to what is their own: they care less for what is common; or, at any rate, they care for it only to the extent to which

> each is individually concerned. Even where there is no other cause for inattention, people are more prone to neglect their duty when they think that another is attending to it: this is what happens in domestic service, where many attendants are sometimes of less assistance than a few. [The scheme proposed in the *Republic* means that] each citizen will have a thousand sons: they will not be the sons of each citizen individually: any son whatever will be equally the son of any father whatever. The result will be that all will equally neglect them. (Aristotle, 1998, p. 42)

Or, in another instance:

> I have in mind here the idea, which Socrates takes as his premise, that the greatest possible unity of the whole city is the supreme good. Yet it is obvious that a city which goes on becoming more and more of a unit, will eventually cease to be a city at all. A city, by its nature, is some sort of plurality. (Plato, 1998, p. 39)

As regards slavery, Aristotle is approving of, rationalizes and even regards "the institution of slavery as essential" (Aristotle, 1998, p. xvi) in his *Politics*. He could not, however, be entirely censured for this. We need to bear in mind that the Greek society was, after all, heavily dependent on slavery, and without it most of what we admire in Greek civilization and most of what Aristotle himself thought really valuable in life would not have come about in the first place. Given all this, it should not come as a surprise that Aristotle could have convinced himself that some people were born to be slaves. But Aristotle's treatment of slavery is not just a concession to contemporary prejudices. It follows naturally from his views that good life requires the leisure resulting from manual labour and that nature is hierarchically organized so that the lower elements within it exist for the sake of the higher. Given these assumptions "it is a natural step to the claim that some inferior kinds of men are born to enable the better kind to live a life of leisure." (Aristotle, 1998, p. xvii)

Moreover, it should be mentioned that Aristotle approves of slavery only and only if it is "natural," i.e., when people "are by nature slaves." Aristotle believes that slavery is necessary, because

some people "produce their best" when they are acting as slaves and are happy and content with the *status quo*.

> We may thus conclude that all men who differ from others as much as the body differs from the soul, or an animal from a man (and this is the case with all whose function is bodily service, and who produce their best when they supply such service)—all such are by nature slaves. (Aristotle, 1998, p. 16).

5. Constitution, Commonwealth, and Slavery in Utopia

The Utopian constitution resembles the Aristotelian constitutional government. It is, as Sanders avers, a "loosely decentralized kingdom ruled by a shadowy, elected monarch who governs with the consent of a council of the great and the good" (Sanders, 2000, p. 94).

> Once a year, every group of thirty households elects an official, formerly called the syphogrant, but now called the phylarch. Over every group of ten syphogrants with their households there is another official, once called the tranibor but now known as the head phylarch. All the syphogrants, two hundred in number, are brought together to elect the governor. They take an oath to choose the man they think best qualified; and then by secret ballot they elect the governor from among four men nominated by the people of the four sections of the city. The governor holds office for life, unless he is suspected of aiming at a tyranny. Though the tranibors are elected annually, they are not changed for light or casual reasons. All their other officials hold office for a single year only. The tranibors meet to consult with the prince every other day, and more often if necessary: they discuss affairs of state, and settle the occasional disputes between private parties (if there are any, and there are in any case very few), acting as quickly as possible. (More, 2006, pp. 549-550)

Whether the constitution of the Utopians could be, according to Aristotle, an "ideal" one is a question which must be answered by referring to the idea of 'commonwealth'. "*Utopia* displays the strong influence of Plato's *Republic*, with its radically communalistic reimagining of society" (Greenblatt, 2006, p. 519). More depicted

his Utopia as a commonwealth, which was supposed to be an ideal one. However, as already mentioned, Aristotle entirely disagrees with any form of communism and commonwealth.

As far as slavery is concerned, the Utopians are Aristotle *manqué*. "Utopia is a society that rests upon slavery, including enslavement for social deviance" (Greenblatt, 2006, p. 520). There are three classes of slaves in Utopia:

> Their slaves are either own former citizens, enslaved for some heinous offense, or else foreigners who were condemned to death in their own land. Most are of the latter sort. Sometimes the Utopians buy them at a very modest rate, more often they ask for them, get them for nothing, and bring them home in considerable numbers. Both kinds of slaves are kept constantly at work, and are always fettered. A third class of slaves consists of hardworking penniless drudges from other nations who voluntarily choose to become slaves in Utopia. Such people are treated well, almost as well as citizens, except that they are given a little extra work, on the score that they're used to it. If one of them wants to leave, which seldom happens, no obstacles are put in his way, nor is he sent off empty-handed. (More, 2006, p. 256)

The "third class of slaves" who "voluntarily choose to become slaves" particularly reminds us of the Aristotelian conception of "natural" slaves.

6. Conclusion

One of the first aims of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is to "give a reflective understanding of well-being or the good life for humans." Aristotle has taken elements such as "happiness," "virtue," and "pleasure" into close consideration and put the emphasis on happiness: *eudaimonia*. Aristotle has a teleological attitude towards *eudaimonia* in general and believes that it should have two features: "it is *the most complete* end, and it is *sufficient of itself*." The elements of "virtue" and "pleasure" are related to the element of "happiness," but they do not possess the two above-mentioned features. Therefore, in Aristotle's view, they cannot be the ultimate goal and the final end.

Politics can be taken as a sequel to the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Like *Ethics*, it has *eudaimonia* as one of its aims and one of the theses that Aristotle holds in it is: "A city state has as its goal well-being, and the ideal constitution is one in which every citizen achieves well-being." Aristotle discusses a wide range of issues in his *Politics*; however, as Barker maintains, the whole *Politics* could be summarized in one word: 'constitutionalism.' Aristotle divides the constitutions into two different categories: (1) "right constitutions": kingship; aristocracy, and the constitutional government, and (2) "wrong constitutions": tyranny; oligarchy; and democracy. Having compartmentalized constitutions, however, Aristotle does not lay down the law: which constitution is an ideal one is a relative matter to Aristotle. Nevertheless, he would generally appear to favour constitutional government to the other forms.

In Book 2 of *Utopia*, More has envisioned an ideal and "perfect" state which is deliberately, and comically, "imperfect." However, people have taken the appellation of More's *chef-d'oeuvre* and applied it to any ideal state imaginable. The Utopians have much in common with Aristotle. Nevertheless, they stand at loggerheads with Aristotle over some issues which in Aristotle's philosophy are of vital—and irreplaceable—importance.

We have seen that Aristotle's compartmentalization of "right constitutions" involves the constitutional government, which he appears to favor most. The Utopian constitution resembles Aristotle's constitutional government in many respects. Utopia, as Sanders avers, is a "loosely decentralized kingdom ruled by a shadowy, elected monarch who governs with the consent of a council of the great and the good" (Aristotle, 1998, p. 94). Nevertheless, it could be suggested that Aristotle would not have considered the constitution of Utopia as an "ideal" one—or even one that approaches the ideal.

Utopia is, after all, a form of commonwealth and Aristotle is explicitly opposed to any form of commonwealth and communism: "Yet it is obvious that a city which goes on becoming more and more of a unit, will eventually cease to be a city at all. A city, by its nature, is some sort of plurality (Aristotle, 1998). The constitution of Utopia is doing its best to make it become "more and more of a

unit"—there is even no variety in dress or housing or cityscape in More's Utopia. This would obviously make it a far cry from Aristotle's idea of 'plurality' in *Politics*.

More's Utopia does not quite accord with what Aristotle thought and expressed in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics* even in terms of its ethical and moral philosophy on which it is based. It is true that the Utopians, like Aristotle, are concerned with the nature of the good and value such elements as "happiness," "virtue," and "pleasure." Nevertheless, their primary emphasis is on the element of "pleasure," which in Aristotle's view, cannot be the ultimate goal of an ideal community—because it is neither *the most complete* end, nor *sufficient of itself*. Although Aristotle asserts that pleasure is directly related to happiness, and that it is part of happiness itself, he would not have agreed with the Utopians over placing the primary emphasis on pleasure. "In the *Ethics* Aristotle seeks to discover what he calls 'good for man'. Everyone, he thinks, will agree that this consists in what he calls *eudaimonia*" (Aristotle, 1998, p. xii). The Utopians, therefore, according to Aristotle, are not able to achieve *eudaimonia* because they are seeking happiness in an element, which, to Aristotle, is only a path leading to the final, self-sufficient goal: *eudaimonia*.

We could have arrived at the same conclusion without referring to the ethical and moral philosophy exercised in Utopia. *Ethics* and *Politics*, as in ethics and politics in general, are directly related to one another. One of the theses Aristotle holds in *Politics* is that "[a] city state has as its goal well-being, and the ideal constitution is one in which every citizen achieves well-being (Honderich, 2005, p. 56). Therefore, because the Utopian constitution, according to Aristotelian philosophy, is not an ideal one, the conclusion to be drawn is that its citizens cannot achieve well-being: *eudaimonia*.

The fact that the Utopian citizens are not able to achieve happiness may leave us nonplussed. The reason for our bewilderment is the fact that the very name of Utopia has long been used to suggest an ideal place: from the mythological land of the Hyperboreans to the Hiltonic Shangri-La, all are simply called Utopia. It is this bewilderment—and its concomitant disappointment—that has led a large number of people to show their frustration by reacting to the idea of a Utopia: it is not perhaps

without good reason that "the seeming impossibility of Utopia (and the many failures to create it) has produced its converse: dystopia" (Cuddon, 1998, p. 959).

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